

# Saint Peter the Apostle: Model for Priests of the New Evangelization

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**Saint Peter the Apostle:  
Model for Priests of the New Evangelization**

**By  
Rev. Daniel F. Hennessey**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the S.T.L. Degree  
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## Introduction

Since the Second Vatican Council, there have existed numerous opportunities for self-reflection on the part of the Church and her members as to how to heed the command of Christ as found at the conclusion of the Gospel according to Matthew: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20a).<sup>1</sup> One particular fruit of this reflection is the New Evangelization, where appropriate new ardor, methods and expression of the faith mark the proclamation of the Gospel and inform the Church’s missionary dimension. In the local Church of Boston, the theme has recently taken on particular importance in light of an increased mindfulness of the need for new approaches to proclamation of the Gospel and reassessment of parish structures. The recent *Disciples in Mission Initiative*,<sup>2</sup> in which multiple parishes are configured with a single pastoral staff, has hastened the need for new approaches even amidst the lessening number of clergy and growth in lay ministers. If the Archdiocese of Boston is to effectively implement the New Evangelization, her priests will need to have a more than cursory understanding of the initiative and its implications for ministry today.

The purpose of this thesis is to present the theme of the New Evangelization from an historical perspective and to propose the Apostle Peter is a good example for priests who are intent on advancing the New Evangelization. The thesis, whose primary audience is the priest, consists of three chapters. The first chapter, “Evolving Understanding of Mission: On the Way

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<sup>1</sup> All Sacred Scripture passages are taken from the New American Bible.

<sup>2</sup> The *Disciples in Mission Plan* can be found at <http://www.disciplesinmission.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Disciples-in-Mission.pdf> (accessed May 15, 2014).

to the New Evangelization”, focuses on the Church’s development of understanding of mission and evangelization from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. It draws insights from three major periods in the life of the Church, including the pontificates of Pope Benedict XV, Pope Pius XI, Pope Pius XII, and Pope Saint John XXIII (1914-1963), the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), and the pontificates of Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul I and Pope Saint John Paul II (1963-2005). The second chapter, “New Times Call for New Approaches: The New Evangelization More Deeply Understood”, continues by presenting insights about the New Evangelization as gained from Benedict XVI and the Synod for the New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Faith. The third and final chapter, “Peter the Apostle, Disciple and Evangelist: Revealed through Encounters with Christ” focuses on the specific theme of how the apostle Peter serves as an exemplary model for priests as disciples and evangelizers. This chapter analyzes five Scripture passages that describe Peter’s encounters with Jesus Christ and his evolving self-understanding as disciple and evangelizer. It will also presents reflections on the implications of these passages for priests committed to the New Evangelization.

While this thesis does not aim to propose each and every aspect of the evolution of the theme of Evangelization in the life of the Church, it will provide ample insights for priests regarding their essential role in the New Evangelization in terms of historical background and expectations today. It is my hope that the priests who read this thesis will be inspired to reflect upon their own encounter with Christ in light of what they learn about the New Evangelization.



## **Chapter One**

### **Evolving Understanding of Mission: On the Way to the New Evangelization**

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

The Church, throughout her history, has heeded the words of the Savior to “go out to all the world and preach the Good News” (Mark 16:16). Certainly, the command to proclaim the *kerygma*, that Jesus Christ is Savior of the world and has invited all people into His life through participation in his Church, is rightly seen as the beginning of the missionary impulse of the Church.<sup>3</sup> This proclamation, inaugurated at Pentecost, is the foundation upon which all evangelization is based.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter surveys the Church’s evolving understanding of evangelization in general and the more recent development of the particular term “New Evangelization” from an historical perspective. It will draw upon insights from three major periods in the recent life of the church: (1) from 1914-1963, including the pontificates of Pope Benedict XV, Pope Pius XI, Pope Pius XII, and Pope Saint John XXIII; (2) the Second Vatican Council; and (3) from 1963-1978, including the pontificates of Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul I and Pope Saint John Paul II.

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<sup>3</sup> Almost every mission letter and serious address on evangelization makes recourse to this mandate of our Lord as the beginning of missionary activity.

<sup>4</sup> The scope of this thesis will not include missiology from the first moment of mission onwards, but will begin in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, in 1919 and finish with the conclusion of the Synod of the New Evangelization in 2012. Note also that although Ecumenism is an important part of the topic of mission and evangelization, it is not within the scope of this thesis to address, per se. For a survey of missiology from Apostolic times see Roger Schroeder and Stephen Bevans, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2004). ; George Weigel, *Evangelical Catholicism: Deep Reform in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church* (New York: Basic, 2013).

During the period from Benedict XV through John XXIII, the Church understood and expressed evangelization primarily in terms of the *missio ad gentes*, where the mission-mindedness of the Church and her ministers focuses primarily on the importance of evangelization as an aspect of mission to people of foreign lands who have yet to hear the Gospel. Magisterial documents during this period focus primarily on the importance of following the command of the Lord to preach to all the nations by providing for missions and missionaries the resources (material and spiritual) necessary for their work.

During the Second Vatican Council, the search for a more theologically nuanced understanding of mission emerged whereby the focus began to shift from “missions” to mission and the Trinitarian “*missio Dei*.” Mission and evangelization began to be recognized as essential parts of the life of the Church because they flow from the Church’s very nature.

During the post-conciliar period and throughout the pontificate of John Paul II, the Church continued to unpack, develop, and implement her understanding of evangelization and engagement with the modern world in light of the Second Vatican Council and the teachings of John Paul II. A newer approach using “new ardor, methods and expression”<sup>5</sup> began to take shape: a *New Evangelization*. This chapter shows primarily through magisterial documents, how the Church’s understanding of mission and evangelization evolved into the New Evangelization by answering the question: “In what way has the Church’s self-understanding as regards mission and evangelization evolved over the period of time from Benedict XV to the end of the pontificate of John Paul II?”

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<sup>5</sup> John Paul II, “Address to the Assembly of C.E.L.A.M., Port-au-Prince, Haiti”, Vatican Website, March 9, 1983, In Spanish, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/1983/march/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19830309\\_assemblea-celam\\_sp.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1983/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19830309_assemblea-celam_sp.html), sec. III (accessed March 20, 2014).

## The First Period: From 1914-1963

### Benedict XV

After World War I, Benedict XV issued the apostolic letter *Maximum Illud*<sup>6</sup> as an exhortation to his brother bishops, clergy, and faithful encouraging missionary activity and recommending some methods to be adopted in order to fulfill the Church's mission mandate in the world. Benedict XV traces with a broad stroke the history of evangelization in the Church and recognizes the ever present and increasing need for missionary activity, especially after the ravages of the war. The apostolic letter does not explicate theological arguments for missionary activity,<sup>7</sup> but rather addresses itself to the duties and obligations of three main constituencies: those in charge of foreign missions and missionary-sending societies, the missionaries themselves, and finally, all Catholics. For Benedict XV, the two primary goals of missionary activity are conversion of people and establishment of local churches.<sup>8</sup> He sets forth the Church's expectations regarding basic attitudes toward missionary activity and the implementation of specific practices, such as the establishment and formation of local clergy, the necessity of comprehensive training for missionaries, and the ways all Catholics can assist in missionary efforts of the Church.<sup>9</sup> This apostolic letter deals solely with what is traditionally

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<sup>6</sup> Benedict XV, *Maximum illud (On the Propagation of the Faith throughout the World)*, Society of the Divine Word Website, November 30, 1919, <http://www.svdcuria.org/public/mission/docs/encycl/mi-en.htm> (accessed March 19, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Schroeder and Bevans, *Constants in Context*, 244.

<sup>8</sup> Schroeder and Bevans, *Constants in Context*, 244. The Church continues to focus on these goals and the *missio ad gentes* up to this very day. As will be seen, with Vatican II and the post-conciliar period attention has focused also on new ways of evangelization based on a newer understanding of constituencies and need.

<sup>9</sup> In *Maximum illud*, Benedict XV points out prayer (MI, 32), fostering vocations (MI, 34) and economic help (MI, 36) as three ways to assist and makes reference to the "organizations that have been established for the support of the missions": the Society for the Propagation of the Faith (MI, 37), the Association of the Holy Childhood (MI, 38) and the Missionary Union of the Clergy (MI, 40).

called the *missio ad gentes*.<sup>10</sup> It is relevant to this study because it establishes a reference point for the Church's understanding of mission in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

## Pius XI

In 1926 Pius XI wrote *Rerum Ecclesiae, On Catholic Missions*.<sup>11</sup> Since World War I had severely limited the European Church's ability to do overseas missionary work, this period is key for the establishment of missionary societies from the United States.<sup>12</sup> In the letter, Pius XI calls for a focus on two objectives in missionary activity: (1) "A larger number than heretofore of missionaries" and (2) "that the faithful be brought to understand...they too must cooperate in a work which is so holy and fruitful."<sup>13</sup> The encyclical goes about explaining how the faithful can support the missionary activity of the Church by prayer, vocations, and participation in and support of missionary societies.<sup>14</sup> Pius XI also emphasizes the importance of a well trained native clergy<sup>15</sup> who are treated equally<sup>16</sup> to their missionary counterparts. He recognizes that the Church exists in order to "spread the Light of the Gospel and the benefits of Christian culture

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<sup>10</sup> *Missio ad gentes* means "mission to the nations" and refers to the missionary activity of the Church to peoples who have not yet heard the Gospel message. As such, it traditionally entails going to nations where Christians have yet to go to announce the *kerygma* and eventually establish the Church.

<sup>11</sup> Pius XI, *Rerum Ecclesiae* (On Catholic Missions), Vatican Website, February 28, 1926, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_28021926\\_rerum-ecclesiae\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_28021926_rerum-ecclesiae_en.html), sec. 1 (accessed March 20, 2014).

<sup>12</sup> *Rerum Ecclesiae* 1.

<sup>13</sup> *Rerum Ecclesiae* 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Rerum Ecclesiae* 8,10,12-17.

<sup>15</sup> *Rerum Ecclesiae* 21.

<sup>16</sup> *Rerum Ecclesiae* 26.

and civilization,”<sup>17</sup> and that it is his responsibility as pope to follow the commission to “strive by might and main to win over and to join to Christ all who are still without the Fold.”<sup>18</sup> *Rerum Ecclesiae* addresses the issue of evangelization in the same way as *Maximum Illud* by focusing on mission *ad gentes*, the conversion of peoples and planting of the Church, but in a different historical context.

In 1931, Pius XI issued another encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*<sup>19</sup> which offers an initial articulation of the new world realities requiring new approaches to missionary activity. This encyclical was presented on the 40th anniversary of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical *Rerum Novarum: On the Condition of the Worker*,<sup>20</sup> and took up similar issues such as topics of economic, human, class, politics, and labor. Pius XI felt it opportune, after World War I and in the depressed economic situation of the late 1920s and early 1930s, to reiterate several of Pope Leo’s concerns, especially as they relate to “socialism” and its many ills.<sup>21</sup> Pius XI addresses the plight of the worker and expresses his concern for those who have rejected the Catholic faith. Many persons and whole “classes of men were in need of being brought back to Christ whom they have denied.”<sup>22</sup> He calls upon Church leaders and the faithful to reach out to Catholics who have left the practice of the faith. In a sense, while not constituting a call for a “new evangelization,” his

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<sup>17</sup> *Rerum Ecclesiae* 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Rerum Ecclesiae* 1.

<sup>19</sup> Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno* (On the Reconstruction of Social Order), Vatican Website, May 15, 1931, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_19310515\\_quadragesimo-anno\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno_en.html), (accessed March 19, 2014).

<sup>20</sup> Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* (On Capital and Labor), Vatican Web site, May 15, 1891, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/leo\\_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_15051891\\_rerum-novarum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html), (accessed March 19, 2014).

<sup>21</sup> *Quadragesimo Anno* 115.

<sup>22</sup> *Quadragesimo Anno* 141.

exhortation bears some similarity to the New Evangelization in that it recognizes those people who have become alienated and inactive, and the need to reach out to them, given rapid changes in the social contexts of the 1930s.<sup>23</sup>

## Pius XII

In 1943, Pius XII wrote the encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*.<sup>24</sup> While it is not a mission encyclical *per se*, it nonetheless helps bring into focus the Church's understanding of evangelization in that it addresses the connection between the Church as the Body of Christ and the mission of the Church given at Pentecost to evangelize the world.<sup>25</sup> It points toward the fundamental principle of evangelization, expounded by the Council Fathers during Vatican II in the decree *Ad gentes*, that the mission of the Body of Christ, given at Pentecost, is to preach the

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<sup>23</sup> Pius XI puts it in vastly more dramatic terms, but nonetheless points out the need for outreach to them. In reference to the need of Christians to reach out to fellow Christians who have left the practice of the faith, writes: "The present state of affairs, Venerable Brethren, clearly indicates the way in which We ought to proceed. For We are now confronted, as more than once before in the history of the Church, with a world that in large part has almost fallen back into paganism. That these whole classes of men may be brought back to Christ Whom they have denied, we must recruit and train from among them, themselves, auxiliary soldiers of the Church who know them well and their minds and wishes, and can reach their hearts with a tender brotherly love. The first and immediate apostles to the workers ought to be workers; the apostles to those who follow industry and trade ought to be from among them themselves." *Quadragesimo Anno* 141.

<sup>24</sup> Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi* (The Mystical Body of Christ), June 29, 1943, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xii\\_enc\\_29061943\\_mystici-corporis-christi\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_29061943_mystici-corporis-christi_en.html) (accessed March 19, 2014).

<sup>25</sup> *Mystici Corporis Christi* 33: "The Church which He founded by His Blood, He strengthened on the Day of Pentecost by a special power, given from heaven. For, having solemnly installed in his exalted office him whom He had already nominated as His Vicar, He had ascended into Heaven; and sitting now at the right hand of the Father He wished to make known and proclaim His Spouse through the visible coming of the Holy Spirit with the sound of a mighty wind and tongues of fire.[41] For just as He Himself when He began to preach was made known by His Eternal Father through the Holy Spirit descending and remaining on Him in the form of a dove, [42] so likewise, as the Apostles were about to enter upon their ministry of preaching, Christ our Lord sent the Holy Spirit down from Heaven, to touch them with tongues of fire and to point out, as by the finger of God, the supernatural mission and office of the Church."

gospel and evangelize.<sup>26</sup> This imagery of the Body Christ is further developed in the documents of Vatican II as well as in the writings of John Paul II.<sup>27</sup>

In the aftermath of World War II, three specifically mission encyclicals were written within a span of ten years. The two mission encyclicals of Pius XII, *Evangelii Praecones*<sup>28</sup> and *Fidei Donum*,<sup>29</sup> were promulgated in 1951 and 1957, respectively. *Princeps Pastorum*<sup>30</sup> written by John XXIII, was promulgated in 1959. These letters show a continuing evolution of understanding on behalf of the Church vis-à-vis mission and evangelization. *Evangelii Praecones* was written in the midst of the Korean War and the spread of communism,<sup>31</sup> and on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pope Benedict XV's encyclical *Rerum Ecclesae*. Pius XII's purpose in writing *Evangelii Praecones* is threefold: appreciation, consolation, and exhortation as regards

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<sup>26</sup> See Weigel, *Evangelical Catholicism: Deep Reform in the 21st-Century Church*, 263, endnote 1. Weigel notes the influence of Pius XII on the Second Vatican Council, specifically as regards the nature of the Church as an evangelizing body.

<sup>27</sup> See John Paul II's catechesis on the *Theology of the Body* and Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*).

<sup>28</sup> Pius XII, *Evangelii Praecones* (On the Promotion of Catholic Missions), Vatican Website, June 2, 1951, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xii\\_enc\\_02061951\\_evangelii-praecones\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_02061951_evangelii-praecones_en.html) (accessed March 19, 2014).

<sup>29</sup> Pius XII, *Fidei Donum* (Gift of Faith), Vatican Website, April 21, 1957, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xii\\_enc\\_21041957\\_fidei-donum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_21041957_fidei-donum_en.html) (accessed March 19, 2014).

<sup>30</sup> John XXIII, *Princeps Pastorum* (The Prince of Shepherds), Vatican Website, November 28, 1959, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_enc\\_28111959\\_princeps\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_28111959_princeps_en.html) (accessed March 19, 2014).

<sup>31</sup> In *Evangelii Praecones* 33, Pius XII describes the situation as a crisis in the world in which two opposing camps are fighting for the human race. In 1951, the world was still reeling from two World Wars, the Korean Conflict and was facing the onslaught of communism and socialism. Pius Wrote: "Venerable Brethren, you are well aware that almost the whole human race is today allowing itself to be driven into two opposing camps, for Christ or against Christ. The human race is involved today in a supreme crisis, which will issue in its salvation by Christ, or in its dire destruction. The preachers of the Gospel are using their talents and energy to extend the Kingdom of Christ; but there are other preachers who, since they profess materialism and reject all hope of eternal happiness, are trying to drag men down to an abject condition"

missionary activity.<sup>32</sup> This encyclical does not make reference to the subjects of the new evangelization: non-engaged Catholics. Rather, it focuses on the importance of missionary activity as a response to the mandate of Christ.<sup>33</sup> In this sense it continues the focus of the Church on the traditional *missio ad gentes*. *Fidei Donum*, *On the Present Condition of the Catholic Missions, especially in Africa*, on the other hand, makes reference to Christians who find themselves alienated and inactive,<sup>34</sup> and shifts the focus to a more inclusive view of evangelization that takes into account those who have previously been Christian. These persons are also to be included among those to whom missionaries are sent. This is the second instance in which those already baptized are recognized as the subjects of evangelization/missionary activity.<sup>35</sup> This shows a growing change in consciousness with regard to missionary activity to focus not only on the conversion of peoples and the establishment of the Church, but also on evangelizing those who have already heard the Gospel.

### **John XXIII**

In *Princeps Pastorum* John XXIII addresses the issues of missions, native clergy and lay participation in the missionary activity of the Church. Recognizing his four years in the *Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith* under Benedict XV, John XXIII acknowledges the regions of the world that are missionary territories and expresses his desire to reach out to

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<sup>32</sup> *Evangelii Praecones* 4.

<sup>33</sup> *Evangelii Praecones* 1, 9.

<sup>34</sup> *Fidei Donum* 5. In speaking of missionaries, Pius XII writes: “Let them direct this zeal towards those regions of Europe in which the Christian religion has been cast off or to the boundless spaces of South America, in both these countries there are great difficulties to be overcome.”

<sup>35</sup> See *Quadragesimo Anno* 141.



them to their praise, encouragement, affections, instruction, and admonition.<sup>36</sup> The document consists of principle after principle of missionary activity, including everything from how the local hierarchy in missionary territories ought to proceed in the building up of missions to the processes used to educate and commission lay catechists. As such, this document does not pertain to new methods or subjects of evangelization specifically, but contributes to an understanding of the importance of lay participation in missionary activity and is a prelude to positions regarding the laity taken during Vatican II, especially in *Apostolicam Actuositatem*.<sup>37</sup> In this regard it represents a development towards a newer understanding of mission and evangelization and is a preparation of sorts for the Second Vatican Council.

### **The Second Period: The Second Vatican Council**

On January 25, 1959, the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul, Pope Saint John XXIII announced his intention to convoke an Ecumenical Council for the universal Church.<sup>38</sup> Nearly three years later, he convoked the Council to begin the next year.<sup>39</sup> On October 11, 1962, the Second Vatican Council was opened. In his address, John XXIII set the stage for the hundreds and hundreds of hours of interventions, conversations, speeches, debates and document drafts

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<sup>36</sup> *Princeps Pastorum* 6.

<sup>37</sup> Paul VI, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Apostolate of the Laity), Vatican Website, November 18, 1965, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19651118\\_apostolicam-actuositatem\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html) (accessed March 19, 2014).

<sup>38</sup> John XXIII, "Address to Cardinals at Saint Paul Outside the Wall Basilica on the Occasion of the Feast of Saint Paul", Vatican II Voice of the Church Website, January 25, 1959, <http://www.vatican2voice.org/91docs/announcement.htm> (accessed March 19, 2014).

<sup>39</sup> John XXIII, *Humanae Salutis*, [http://benedictumxvi.va/holy\\_father/john\\_xxiii/apost\\_constitutions/1961/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_apc\\_19611225\\_humanae-salutis\\_lt.html](http://benedictumxvi.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/apost_constitutions/1961/documents/hf_j-xxiii_apc_19611225_humanae-salutis_lt.html) (accessed March 19, 2014).

that would follow by emphasizing two points: (1) there were great problems facing the world,<sup>40</sup> and (2) Christ and his Church possess the answer to those problems.<sup>41</sup> The greatest concern, therefore, was engaging the modern world and teaching the faith in the context in which the Church found herself.<sup>42</sup> The Council, from its beginning, proposed a “renewal of the Church’s evangelizing activity,”<sup>43</sup> calling upon the initial mandate of our Lord to go to all the nations.

### **The Four Constitutions**

The Vatican II conciliar and post-conciliar documents<sup>44</sup> in general and the four Constitutions *Lumen Gentium*,<sup>45</sup> *Gaudium et Spes*,<sup>46</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*,<sup>47</sup> and *Dei*

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<sup>40</sup> See John XXIII, *Humanae Salutis* (Human Salvation), Vatican II Voice of the Church Website, December 25, 1961, <http://www.vatican2voice.org/91docs/convoke.htm>, sec. 1 (accessed March 19, 2014). John XXIII writes: “The Divine Redeemer Jesus Christ, who before ascending into heaven conferred on the apostles the mandate to preach the gospel to all peoples, in support and guarantee of their mission, made the comforting promise: “Behold I am with you all days even unto the consummation of the world” (Mt. 28:20). This divine presence, which has been alive and active in all times in the Church, is noticeable above all in the most grave periods of humanity. It is then that the spouse of Christ shows itself in all its splendor as the master of truth and minister of salvation. And it is then, also, that it deploys all its power of charity, prayer, sacrifice, and suffering - invincible spiritual means and the same used by the divine Founder, who in the solemn hour of His life declared: “Have faith for I have overcome the world” (Jn. 16:33).”

<sup>41</sup> See John XXIII, “Address of Pope John XXIII Opening the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, St Peter’s Basilica”, Vatican II Voice of the Church Website, October 11, 1962, [http://www.vatican2voice.org/91docs/opening\\_speech.htm](http://www.vatican2voice.org/91docs/opening_speech.htm), sec. 2 (accessed March 19, 2014). John XXIII writes: “The great problem confronting the world after almost two thousand years remains unchanged. Christ is ever resplendent as the center of history and of life. Men are either with Him and His Church, and then they enjoy light, goodness, order, and peace. Or else they are without Him, or against Him, and deliberately opposed to His Church, and then they give rise to confusion, to bitterness in human relations, and to the constant danger of fratricidal wars.”

<sup>42</sup> See John XXIII, *Humanae Salutis* (Human Salvation), Vatican II Voice of the Church Website, December 25, 1961, <http://www.vatican2voice.org/91docs/convoke.htm>, sec. 7 (accessed March 19, 2014). John XXIII writes: “The forthcoming Council will meet therefore and at a moment in which the Church finds very alive the desire to fortify its faith, and to contemplate itself in its own awe-inspiring unity. In the same way, it feels more urgent the duty to give greater efficiency to its sound vitality and to promote the sanctification of its members, the diffusion of revealed truth, the consolidation of its agencies.”

<sup>43</sup> Synod of Bishops XIII Ordinary General Assembly, *Instrumentum Laboris*: The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith, Vatican Website, 2012, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_20120619\\_instrumentum-xiii\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20120619_instrumentum-xiii_en.html), sec. 10 (accessed March 19, 2014).

<sup>44</sup> In fact, looking at the council nearly 50 years later the Synod of Bishops for the New Evangelization pointed out that evangelization “became one of the central topics of the Council.” See Synod of Bishops, “*Instrumentum Laboris*: The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith, 2012.

*Verbum*<sup>48</sup> in particular, all express a missionary and evangelizing motif. Each of the Constitutions, by focusing on the mystery of the nature, life, and mission of the Church,<sup>49</sup> show forth Vatican II as a “missionary council.”<sup>50</sup> The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, deals with the nature and universal mission of the Church<sup>51</sup> understood in a Trinitarian context.<sup>52</sup> It asserts that “all people are called to belong to the new People of God”<sup>53</sup> and that the Church, as the “universal sacrament of salvation,”<sup>54</sup> exists to exercise her missionary activity to all peoples.<sup>55</sup> *Lumen Gentium* also makes it clear that it is the role of the laity by virtue of their

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<sup>45</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, November 21, 1964, Vatican Website, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19641121\\_lumen-gentium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html) (accessed March 19, 2014).

<sup>46</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, December 7, 1965, Vatican Website, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_cons\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html) (accessed March 19, 2014).

<sup>47</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, December 6, 1963, Vatican Website, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19631204\\_sacrosanctum-concilium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html) (accessed March 19, 2014).

<sup>48</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum: Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, November 18, 1965, Vatican Website, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651118\\_dei-verbum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html) (accessed March 19, 2014).

<sup>49</sup> Anne Hunt, "The Trinitarian Depths of Vatican II," *Theological Studies* 74, no. 1 (2013), 6.

<sup>50</sup> Jeffrey Gros and Stephan B. Bevans, *Evangelization and Religious Freedom: Ad Gentes, Dignitatis Humanae* (New York: Paulist Press, 2009), 3.

<sup>51</sup> *Lumen Gentium* 1.

<sup>52</sup> See Hunt, *Trinitarian Depths of Vatican II*, 1-18. Hunt gives an excellent synopsis of the Trinitarian focus of the Second Vatican Council.

<sup>53</sup> *Lumen Gentium* 13.

<sup>54</sup> *Lumen Gentium* 48.

<sup>55</sup> Gros and Bevans, *Evangelization and Religious Freedom*, 4.

baptism to share in the missionary activity of the Church.<sup>56</sup> Of the four Constitutions of Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* is referenced most in the Council's Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, *Ad Gentes*.<sup>57</sup> This shows the importance the Council Fathers placed on the nature of the Church and the role of the laity, as expounded in *Lumen Gentium*, on their presentation of mission. The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, is addressed "not only to the sons of the Church and to all who invoke the name of Christ, but to the whole of humanity"<sup>58</sup> in the hopes of understanding "the presence and activity of the Church"<sup>59</sup> in the modern world. By assessing the "signs of the times"<sup>60</sup> and applying the mystery of the Church to them, the Constitution affirms the essential missionary nature of the People of God.<sup>61</sup> Through focusing on an assessment of the modern world and how the church can engage it, *Gaudium et Spes* places mission and evangelization at center stage. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, which introduces the reform of liturgy and sacraments, acknowledges that the liturgy shows the Church to be "a sign lifted up among the nations under which the scattered children of God may be gathered together, until

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<sup>56</sup> *Lumen Gentium* 33 states: "The lay apostolate, however, is a participation in the salvific mission of the Church itself. Through their baptism and confirmation all are commissioned to that apostolate by the Lord Himself. Moreover, by the sacraments, especially holy Eucharist, that charity toward God and man which is the soul of the apostolate is communicated and nourished. Now the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can it become the salt of the earth. Thus every layman, in virtue of the very gifts bestowed upon him, is at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the Church itself 'according to the measure of Christ's bestowal' (Eph. 4:7)."

<sup>57</sup> A careful counting shows that *Lumen Gentium* is referenced more than 35 times in *Ad Gentes*.

<sup>58</sup> *Gaudium et Spes* 2

<sup>59</sup> *Gaudium et Spes* 2

<sup>60</sup> *Gaudium et Spes* 4

<sup>61</sup> Gros and Bevans, *Evangelization and Religious Freedom*, 5.

there is one sheepfold and one shepherd.”<sup>62</sup> The Church, coming together to celebrate the sacraments, most especially the Eucharist, does so as an expression of, and participation in, the mission of God “that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of truth” (1 Tim 2:4).<sup>63</sup> In this sense, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* places liturgy and worship at the center of the missionary activity of the Church. Lastly, the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, places mission at the center of its teaching by introducing the topic of divine revelation in the context of salvation history and affirming the belief that salvation is a summons for all.<sup>64</sup> All four of these Constitutions, in their own way, relate to the mission of the Church, contribute to the overall missionary focus of the Council, and contribute to shifting the focus of discussion from primarily practical aspects of evangelization to the theological foundations from which mission and evangelization flow. The four major Constitutions of Vatican II show that the Church began to consider the topic of mission no longer primarily in terms of the mission *ad gentes* but also in terms of her very nature and with a more intentional engagement with the modern world.

### ***Ad Gentes: On the Missionary Activity of the Church***

If the four Constitutions of the Second Vatican Council express a missionary motif, the decree *Ad Gentes: On the Missionary Activity of the Church* deals more directly and intentionally

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<sup>62</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 2

<sup>63</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 5-6

<sup>64</sup> *Dei Verbum* 1 states: “Hearing the word of God with reverence and proclaiming it with faith, the sacred synod takes its direction from these words of St. John: “We announce to you the eternal life which dwelt with the Father and was made visible to us. What we have seen and heard we announce to you, so that you may have fellowship with us and our common fellowship be with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:2-3). Therefore, following in the footsteps of the Council of Trent and of the First Vatican Council, this present council wishes to set forth authentic doctrine on divine revelation and how it is handed on, so that by hearing the message of salvation the whole world may believe, by believing it may hope, and by hoping it may love.” Note also that the return to the vernacular had within it’s purpose the aim of making the Word of God intelligible and accessible.

with “the whole theological problematic and the praxis linked to mission,”<sup>65</sup> and shows a fundamental shift in the Church’s articulation of the topic of mission and evangelization from solely juridical/territorial to theological/anthropological. In six chapters, it gives a sketch of missionary principles, a call to rally the Church, and an exhortation to spread the reign of Christ and to prepare for his coming.<sup>66</sup> The theological/doctrinal principles in the first chapter of *Ad Gentes* are the fruit of extensive debate during the ante-preparatory and preparatory periods, sub-commission, and General Sessions of the Council.<sup>67</sup> When debating the purpose and content of the first chapter of the *Schema* which eventually became *Ad Gentes*, some members, especially those of the *Congregation De Propaganda Fide*, pushed for a document with a purely juridical approach to the missions.<sup>68</sup> This approach proposed a document similar to previous mission letters and promised an exhortation on the importance of missionary activity and its support. Others, including Yves Congar, wanted to focus on a theological definition, consistent with the other conciliar documents, and based on the nature and mission of the Church.<sup>69</sup> As is evident

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<sup>65</sup> Stephen B. Bevans and others, *Mission for the 21st Century: Papers from the Symposium and Consultation Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Foundation of Techny and the 125th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Society of the Divine Word* (Chicago, Ill.: Chicago Center for Global Ministries (CCGM) Publications, 2001), 23

<sup>66</sup> *Ad Gentes* contains six chapters: (1) Principles of Doctrine, (2) Mission Work Itself, (3) Particular Churches, (4) Missionaries, (5) Planning Missionary Activity, (6) Cooperation.

<sup>67</sup> James B. Anderson, *A Vatican II Pneumatology of The Pascal Mystery: The Historical-Doctrinal Genesis of Ad Gentes I, 2-5*, (Rome, Italy, Editrice Ponticia Universita Gregoriana), 1988, 1-201. Anderson has an excellent synopsis of the development of arguments throughout the various schema that eventually became the decree *Ad Gentes*. See also Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph A. Komonchak, eds, *History of Vatican II: Vol. V: The Council and the Transition, The Fourth period and the End of the Council September 1965-December 1965*, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (Maryknoll, NY; Orbis Books, 2006), 427-450.

<sup>68</sup> Anderson, *A Vatican II Pneumatology*, 107.

<sup>69</sup> Yves Congar, O.P., *My Journal of the Council*, (Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press, 2012) 743-746. Congar was a *periti* on the *Commission De Missionibus*. When asked his opinion about the nature and definition of mission, he emphasized the importance of defining mission not only in relation to places, but in relation to persons: Monday 29 March 1965. Congar writes: “1.) If what is wanted is a definition with a THEOLOGICAL foundation, one must necessarily start from a broad notion, of the MISSION of the Church itself; then one can specify a stricter sense. 2.) That, or the missions, should be defined by their object or their goal. These are not territories, but PEOPLE: those

from the acceptance of the final schema by the Council Fathers, *Ad Gentes* contains both theological principles<sup>70</sup> as well as an exhortation to increased missionary activity. Of particular note is the fact that the decree defines mission and evangelization in an interrelated way, and in doing so, brings together two (seemingly opposed) schools of thought.<sup>71</sup> The decree states that “‘Missions’ is the term usually given to those particular undertakings by which the heralds of the Gospel, sent out by the Church and going forth into the whole world, carry out the task of *preaching the Gospel* and *planting the Church* among peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ. These undertakings are brought to completion by missionary activity and are mostly exercised in certain territories recognized by the Holy See. The proper purpose of this missionary activity is *evangelization*, and the planting of the Church among those peoples and groups where

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who do not know Christ, or do not believe in him. Mission has in view groups of people in the situation of unbelief. It can very often be the case that, in FACT, these groups are to be found in large numbers in certain PLACES, and that, therefore, in FACT, mission has in view certain PLACES: this might very often be the case, but it is ACCIDENTAL: the cardinal himself used the word ‘contingent.’ Territory, as such, is not a formal part of the definition. 3.) So one can not oppose as CONTRADICTORY a geographical definition and a sociological one (I prefer to say anthropological): they are not on the same plane. The one is essential, the other is accidental. In my view, one ought to be able to LOCATE the territorial notion within the definition that has HUMAN situation in view. It should be possible to agree and to arrive at unanimity.”

<sup>70</sup> The first Chapter of *Ad gentes* contains several theological principles: “The Church is missionary by her very nature and this activity is a share in the Trinitarian mission that leads to a share in the life of the Trinity in a human community. (AG,2) Christ is the center of the missionary activity of the Church and in him we see what God has done and what God continuously offers to every human person. Because of this, each Christian is called to preach Christ as a response to faith. (AG,3) The Holy Spirit vivifies the missionary activity (AG, 4) in the Church, which is the sacrament of salvation, founded by Christ and entrusted to the Apostles. Just as Christ Himself had been sent by the Father, the Apostles were sent by Christ. (AG,5) *Ad gentes* also notes that the missions correctly defined are those places where Christians go to preach the Gospel and establish the Church according to the mandate of Christ.(AG,6) This activity, coming from the will of God (AG,7), involves the whole Mystical Body and is directed toward the glory of God. (AG,7) Lastly, the missionary activity of the Church corresponds not only to the nature of the Church but also to the nature and aspirations of every human person. (AG,7)

<sup>71</sup> Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I., “The Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity, *Ad Gentes*” in *Vatican II : Renewal within Tradition*, eds. Matthew L. Lamb and Matthew Levering, (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 287-310. In reference to the definitions of mission and evangelization, Cardinal George writes: “Historically this is significant in its insistence on bringing together approaches of the Munster and Louvain schools of missiology. The separation of evangelization and Church planting had been artificial, a battle of academics that could only harm missionary vision. Now, the debate has to go on holding both concepts together and developing a synthesis in light of the theological and ecclesiological bases for mission offered by *Ad gentes*.” P. 294.

it has not yet taken root.”<sup>72</sup> According to the decree, evangelizing activity makes the Church “*fully present* to all men or nations, in order that, by the example of her life and by her preaching, by the sacraments and other means of grace, she may lead them to the faith, the freedom and the peace of Christ; that thus there may lie open before them a firm and free road to full participation in the mystery of Christ.”<sup>73</sup> *Ad gentes* contributes to the evolving understanding of mission and evangelization, therefore, by emphasizing the missionary nature of the Church and every Christian in making the Church “fully present.” It also contributes by shifting the conversation about mission and evangelization from a primarily practical conversation to a more nuanced theological discussion.

### **The Third Period: From 1965-2005**

#### **Paul VI**

In 1973, less than ten years after *Ad Gentes* was promulgated, in the midst of the post-conciliar period of crisis, debate, confusion and transition, the Synod of Bishops gathered in order to address once again the question of evangelization. On December 8, 1975, in response to the Third General Assembly of Bishops request for him to write an exhortation based on the Synod, Paul VI issued the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*.<sup>74</sup> This document contributes to the evolving understanding of evangelization in two ways: first, by specifically calling for a new time of evangelization; and second, by specifically calling the Church to focus

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<sup>72</sup> *Ad Gentes* 6. This point affirms the responsibility of the *missio ad gentes* to convert peoples and plant the Church.

<sup>73</sup> *Ad Gentes* 5. See George, “Decree on Church’s Missionary Activity”, 294. Here, Cardinal George uses *Ad gentes* 5 to assert that evangelization, as an integral part of mission, is the activity by which the church is planted in a particular place.

<sup>74</sup> Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (On Evangelization in the Modern World), December 8, 1975, Eternal Word Television Network Website, <https://www.ewtn.com/library/papaldoc/p6evan.htm> (accessed March 20, 2014).



on all aspects of society. Paul VI states that: "...at the end of that memorable Assembly, the Fathers decided to remit to the Pastor of the universal Church, with great trust and simplicity, the fruits of all their labors, stating that they awaited from him a fresh forward impulse, capable of creating within a Church still more firmly rooted in the undying power and strength of Pentecost a new period of evangelization."<sup>75</sup>

The "new period of evangelization"<sup>76</sup> that Paul VI called for raised some questions that the Third General Assembly "kept constantly in mind."<sup>77</sup> These questions pertain to the Church's ability to evangelize and ask whether she continues to have the "energy," "evangelical force," and "methods" necessary to proclaim the gospel to the modern world after Vatican II.<sup>78</sup> Paul VI's response to these questions is "a new period of evangelization"<sup>79</sup>: new in the sense that it "be a noble, bountiful, flowering of abundance."<sup>80</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi* not only contributes to an evolving understanding of evangelization by calling for a new period, but also by calling for a

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<sup>75</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 2.

<sup>76</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 2.

<sup>77</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 4.

<sup>78</sup> In *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 4 Paul VI states: "It [evangelization] poses three burning questions, which the 1974 Synod kept constantly in mind: In our day, what has happened to that hidden energy of the Good News, which is able to have a powerful effect on man's conscience? To what extent and in what way is that evangelical force capable of really transforming the people of this century? What methods should be followed in order that the power of the Gospel may have its effect? Basically, these inquiries make explicit the fundamental question that the Church is asking herself today and which may be expressed in the following terms: after the Council and thanks to the Council, which was a time given her by God, at this turning-point of history, does the Church or does she not find herself better equipped to proclaim the Gospel and to put it into people's hearts with conviction, freedom of spirit and effectiveness?"

<sup>79</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 2.

<sup>80</sup> J. Brian Bransfield, *The Human Person: According to John Paul II*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2010), 45. Bransfield argues that the Latin *Feliciora evangelizationis tempora* used in the *editio typica* of *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, although correctly translated 'new period of evangelization' indicated that "The new is not opposite what was in the past, or opposite 'old.' The new is not synonymous with contemporary or current. Rather, the new evangelization is new in the sense that evangelization is to be a noble, bountiful, flourishing of abundance. While the word 'new' is a suitable adjective for 'evangelization,' the quality of the newness should be understood in the sense of *feliciora*."

new focus on all the “strata of humanity.”<sup>81</sup> Throughout the exhortation, in a systematic approach, Paul VI outlines four important aspects of evangelization and the importance of addressing all groups of people regardless of their relationship to the Church: (1) the content of evangelization, (2) the methods of evangelization, (3) to whom the Gospel message of evangelization is addressed, and (4) by whom the message is to be preached today. He notes that it is possible to define evangelization “in terms of preaching Christ to those who do not know him”<sup>82</sup> but that, in the new period, evangelization means bringing the Gospel to the whole world, not only in a geographic sense but in a holistic sense.<sup>83</sup> The new period of evangelization reaches out even toward peoples and cultures which have already heard the Gospel message but for whatever reason have fallen away from it. Furthermore, Paul VI admits a rupture unfortunately present between the Gospel and the culture of his time and recognizes the need for the Church to evangelize, especially amidst the cultures presently considered Christian but no longer practicing.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 19. See also *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 4 which states: “For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new: “Now I am making the whole of creation new.” But there is no new humanity if there are not first of all new persons renewed by Baptism and by lives lived according to the Gospel. The purpose of evangelization is therefore precisely this interior change, and if it had to be expressed in one sentence the best way of stating it would be to say that the Church evangelizes when she seeks to convert, solely through the divine power of the message she proclaims, both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieu which are theirs.”

<sup>82</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 5.

<sup>83</sup> Paul VI also created dioceses where prelatures had previously existed and established new Metropolitan Sees according to demographic shifts and urbanization within developing countries.

<sup>84</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 20 states: “The split between the Gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time, just as it was of other times. Therefore every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly of cultures. They have to be regenerated by an encounter with the Gospel. But this encounter will not take place if the Gospel is not proclaimed.”

## John Paul I

On August 6, 1978, Pope Paul VI passed to the Lord. Twenty days later, the sixty-six year old Cardinal Albino Luciani, Patriarch of Venice, was elected Supreme Pontiff, taking the name Pope John Paul. The world was shocked when, thirty three days later, John Paul passed away in his sleep of an apparent massive heart attack. John Paul's pontificate, short as it was, still points out two important aspects of evangelization. First, in the program for his papacy expressed in the *Urbi et Orbi* address<sup>85</sup> shortly after his election, he emphasizes the importance of each baptized person in the work of evangelization as expressed in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and the Second Vatican Council.<sup>86</sup> John Paul I emphasizes: "We wish to remind the entire Church that its first duty is that of evangelization. Our predecessor, Paul VI, presented the directions for this in his memorable document...If all the sons and daughters of the Church would know how to be tireless missionaries of the Gospel, a new flowering of holiness and renewal would spring up in this world that thirsts for love and for truth."<sup>87</sup> Secondly, he spoke of the primacy of proclaiming the name and person of Jesus Christ in the activity of evangelization, and that particular attention is to be given to evangelizing the baptized. On the very day that John Paul would pass to the Lord he met with a group of bishops from the Philippines on their *ad limina* visit and stated: "Among the rights of the faithful, one of the greatest is the right to receive God's

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<sup>85</sup> John Paul I, *Urbi et Orbi Radio Address*, Vatican Website, August 27, 1978, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_i/messages/documents/hf\\_jp-i\\_mes\\_urbi-et-orbi\\_27081978\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_i/messages/documents/hf_jp-i_mes_urbi-et-orbi_27081978_en.html) (accessed March 22, 2014).

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Paul I. John, *The Message of John Paul I* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1978), 32. John Paul I writes: "We wish to remind the entire Church that its first duty is that of evangelization. Our predecessor, Paul VI, presented the directions for this in his memorable document: animated by faith, nourished by the Word of God, and strengthened by the heavenly food of the Eucharist, one should study every way, seek every means "in season and out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2), to spread the word, to proclaim the message, to announce that salvation which creates in the soul a restlessness to pursue truth and at the same time offers strength from above. If all the sons and daughters of the Church would know how to be tireless missionaries of the Gospel, a new flowering of holiness and renewal would spring up in this world that thirsts for love and for truth."

word in its entirety and purity, with all its exigencies and power. A great challenge of our day is the full evangelization of all those who have been baptized.”<sup>88</sup> While his papacy was short, John Paul I nonetheless contributed to the Church’s understanding of evangelization in the modern world.

## John Paul II

One could write hundreds of pages on the pontificate of Pope John Paul II.<sup>89</sup> The scope of this thesis, however, here is to show an evolving understanding of evangelization in the Church through some instances in his pontificate.<sup>90</sup> To this end, the theme of the “New Evangelization” will come into focus through five of John Paul II’s addresses and documents: (1) the homily given at his Inauguration as Supreme Pontiff,<sup>91</sup> (2) a homily given at a Cistercian

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<sup>88</sup> John Paul I, “Address to a group of bishops from the Philippines on their ad limina visit”, Vatican Website, September 28, 1978, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_i/speeches/documents/hf\\_jp-i\\_spe\\_28091978\\_philippian-bishops\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_i/speeches/documents/hf_jp-i_spe_28091978_philippian-bishops_en.html) (accessed March 22, 2014).

<sup>89</sup> See George Weigel, *Witness to Hope : The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, 1st ed.. ed. (New York; New York, NY: Cliff Street Books, 1999). ; George Weigel, *The End and the Beginning: Pope John Paul II: The Struggle for Freedom, the Last Years, the Legacy*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed..ed. (New York: Doubleday, 2010). Tad Szulc, *Pope John Paul II. : The Biography* (New York: Scribner, 1995). ; Jonathan Kwitny, *Man of the Century : The Life and Times of Pope John Paul II*, 1st ed.. ed. (New York: Henry Holt and Co; Henry Holt, 1997). ; Garry O'Connor, *Universal Father : A Life of Pope John Paul II* (London: Bloomsbury, 2005).

<sup>90</sup> It is to be noted that the scope of this thesis does not treat the Declaration *Dominus Iesus*, of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which was ratified and confirmed by John Paul II in June 2000 to “reiterate and clarify certain truths,” many of which pertain to mission, interreligious dialogue and evangelization of peoples. The Declaration was received in a variety of ways, which did in fact have an effect on how the theme of the New Evangelization was to be understood. For some it provided much needed clarification. For others, it has become a source of confusion, controversy and difficulty. See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Declaration ‘*Dominus Iesus*’ On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church,” August 6, 2000, Vatican Website, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20000806\\_dominus\\_iesus\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus_iesus_en.html) (accessed August 8, 2014).

<sup>91</sup> John Paul II, “Homily of His Holiness John Paul II for the Inauguration of his Pontificate”, Vatican Website, October 22, 1978, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/homilies/1978/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_hom\\_19781022\\_inizio-pontificato\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/homilies/1978/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19781022_inizio-pontificato_en.html) (accessed March 22, 2014).

Abbey in Moglia,<sup>92</sup> (3) an address to CELAM in Port-au-prince, Haiti,<sup>93</sup> (4) the post-synodal exhortation *Christifideles Laici*,<sup>94</sup> and (5) the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*.<sup>95</sup> John Paul II's contribution to the Church's evolving understanding of evangelization is the presentation of evangelization as something new and necessary. The five addresses/documents teach five lessons about the New Evangelization: (1) it requires a personal relationship with Christ; (2) it is framed by the Cross; (3) it requires new ardor, methods, and expression; (4) it is done by the whole Church, especially the laity; and (5) it is driven by the needs of those to whom the Gospel is preached.

### **Homily at the Inauguration of Pontificate**

In the homily for his inauguration, John Paul II teaches that the New Evangelization is all about the fulfillment by God, through the Church, of the personal yearning in each person for communion. For this reason the New Evangelization is deeply anthropological in its focus. John Paul marks the beginning of his pontificate by inviting the whole world into a relationship with God. Like other modern popes, at his inauguration he preached on Matthew 16:16 in which Peter confesses, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." In this context, John Paul

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<sup>92</sup> John Paul II, "Homily of His Holiness John Paul II: Apostolic Pilgrimage to Poland, Mass at the Shrine of the Holy Cross, Moglia", Vatican Website, June 9, 1979, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/homilies/1979/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_hom\\_19790609\\_polonia-mogila-nowa-huta\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/homilies/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19790609_polonia-mogila-nowa-huta_en.html) (accessed March 22, 2014).

<sup>93</sup> John Paul II, "Address of His Holiness John Paul II to the Assembly of CELAM", Vatican Website, in Spanish, March 9, 1983, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/1983/march/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19830309\\_assemblea-celam\\_sp.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1983/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19830309_assemblea-celam_sp.html) (accessed March 22, 2014).

<sup>94</sup> John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici* (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World), Vatican Website, December 30, 1988, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_30121988\\_christifideles-laici\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici_en.html) (accessed March 22, 2014).

<sup>95</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate), Vatican Website, December 7, 1990, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_07121990\\_redemptoris-missio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio_en.html) (accessed March 22, 2014).

invites all people to the same faith expressed by the Apostle Peter, and recognizes that each person, although perhaps at different stages of belief or disbelief, is known by God and will find personal fulfillment only in God through Jesus Christ. John Paul II reaches out to all strata of society and invites each person, “Do not be afraid. Open wide the doors for Christ. To his saving power open the boundaries of States, economic and political systems, the vast fields of culture, civilization and development. Do not be afraid. Christ knows ‘what is in man.’ He alone knows it.”<sup>96</sup> John Paul II frames evangelization in terms of a personal encounter with Jesus Christ.

### **Homily at Cistercian Monastery, Monglia, Poland**

During his historic pastoral visit to Poland in 1979, John Paul II teaches that participation in the Cross and witness to the Cross must frame a true understanding of the New Evangelization. In the course of the homily he delivered on the occasion of a visit to the Cistercian Abbey in Moglia, near Nowa Huta,<sup>97</sup> John Paul II makes specific reference to a new evangelization that had begun with the raising of the Cross in that region of Poland. John Paul II proclaims that “where the Cross is raised, there is the sign that evangelization has begun.”<sup>98</sup> Just as in the first evangelization of that land, a relic of the True Cross was brought and raised up to show that evangelization was to begin, so too, with the raising of the cross at Nowa Huta in the 1970’s a new evangelization had begun. John Paul II states, “This has been the start of the new

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<sup>96</sup> John Paul II, *Homily for the Inauguration of his Pontificate*, sec.5.

<sup>97</sup> Nowa Huta was the place of great conflict and battle engaged in by the people of Poland and the communist government in the 1970’s. Nowa Huta, the “new city”, had been built as “the model workers town-without-a-church on the outskirts of Krakow” and the site of a cat and mouse game of conflict regarding religious freedom between Archbishop Wojtyla and the communist party as regards religious freedom. Eventually, in 1977, Archbishop Wojtyla consecrated the Ark Church there, named after the Blessed Mother. During the negotiations of that papal visit, the communist party did not allow John Paul to visit the Ark Church built at Nowa Huta, so during the visit to the nearby Cistercian Abbey, he took the opportunity to speak about the erection of the church and the topics of work, religious freedom and the cross. See Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 189-190.

<sup>98</sup> John Paul II, *Homily: Mass at the Shrine of the Holy Cross, Moglia*, 1.

evangelization at the beginning of the new millennium of Christianity in Poland.”<sup>99</sup> He goes on to say that what had begun in Poland, he brings with him to Rome. What he tried to do for Poland, he intends to do for the whole world: to be a witness of the Cross of Christ. In this John Paul II shows that the new evangelization is only fully understood in terms of bearing witness to the Cross of Jesus Christ.

### **Address to the Episcopal Conference of Latin America (CELAM)**

During his address to the assembly of CELAM,<sup>100</sup> on the occasion of his apostolic journey to Central America in 1983, John Paul II concretizes the term “New Evangelization,” emphasizing that it requires a “new ardor, methods and expression.”<sup>101</sup> He uses the theme of history to encourage the bishops of CELAM to enter into a new period of evangelization on the five hundredth anniversary of the evangelization of the Americas. John Paul emphasizes that the new evangelization is not just a re-evangelization but also a renewed evangelization that, if it is to be truly the presentation of the Gospel anew, requires the bishops, priests, and lay faithful to celebrate the fifth centenary with serious reflection. He encourages them to look toward the challenges of the present, the efforts having been made, and the future as to consolidate the work.<sup>102</sup> What makes the work new is not simply re-iterating the message, but re-proposing the unchanging Gospel with new ardor, new methods, and new expression.

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>100</sup> Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, CELAM, is the Latin American Episcopal Council for the Catholic Church.

<sup>101</sup> John Paul II, *Address to the Assembly of CELAM*, sec. III.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

In the address, John Paul II briefly outlines some “fundamental assumptions for the new evangelization”<sup>103</sup> which, I argue, correspond to the three aspects of ardor, method, and expression. First, he calls for a “vitality” in the Church of Latin America that requires “numerous and well-trained priests.”<sup>104</sup> In order for the new evangelization to possess the strength it needs to truly be *new*, it requires priests to serve as leaders. The priests must provide strength to the new evangelization. John Paul II also calls upon the bishops to allow the laity to know and to take their rightful place in the Church and society by insisting they engage in “forming an increasing number of lay people ready to collaborate effectively in the work of evangelization.”<sup>105</sup> In this, John Paul II is calling the bishops, priests and religious of Latin America to a new method of evangelization where the Church, in the light of Vatican II, readies the lay faithful to become evangelizers. John Paul II is teaching that lay collaboration and leadership is at the center of the new *method* of evangelization. Lastly, John Paul II emphasizes Vatican II and its local application of it (Puebla Conference)<sup>106</sup> and calls upon the bishops to “receive the integrity of the message.”<sup>107</sup> The *expression* of the new evangelization requires adhering to the most sincere and correct interpretation of the Church’s teaching, in light of the Second Vatican Council and the local conferences. John Paul II’s CELAM address is a challenge to newness of approach found in its ardor, methods, and expression. New ardor will

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> The Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate (CELAM) gathered in Puebla, Mexico in late January 1979 to study and reflect upon the meaning of their mission. This conference was convoked by Pope John Paul II on January 28, 1979. See John Paul II, Address of His Holiness, Third General Conference of Latin American Bishops, January 28, 1979, Vatican Web Site, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/1979/january/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19790128\\_messico-puebla-episc-latam\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1979/january/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19790128_messico-puebla-episc-latam_en.html) (accessed August 7, 2014).

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.



come through numerous and well trained priests, new methods will be accomplished through collaboration among well trained laity, and new expression of the gospel will be done in light of the Second Vatican Council and local plans derived from the Council's documents.

### *Christifideles Laici*

In 1988, John Paul II presents *Christifideles Laici*, the post synodal apostolic exhortation “On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World,” in which he emphasizes the dignity, participation, co-responsibility, stewardship, and formation of the lay faithful in the life of the universal Church. In doing so, he makes it clear that the New Evangelization is done by the whole Church, especially the laity. In the post-synodal exhortation, John Paul II calls for “*a giant step forward* in her evangelization effort, and enter into *a new stage of history* in her missionary dynamism,”<sup>108</sup> and emphasizes the indispensable role of the laity in accomplishing the New Evangelization. “Its purpose,” he writes, “[is] the *formation of mature ecclesial communities*, in which the faith might radiate and fulfill the basic meaning of adherence to the person of Christ and his Gospel, of an encounter and sacramental communion with him, and of an existence lived in charity and in service.”<sup>109</sup> The laity have an indispensable and integral role in the formation of these ecclesial communities and therefore possess the ability of healing the Church and society.<sup>110</sup> Through remaking “the Christian fabric of ecclesial communities,”<sup>111</sup> the lay faithful participate also in healing the fabric of society as a whole. John Paul II calls upon the faithful to start with themselves by developing

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<sup>108</sup> *Christifideles Laici* 35.

<sup>109</sup> *Christifideles Laici* 34.

<sup>110</sup> *Christifideles Laici* 34.

<sup>111</sup> *Christifideles Laici* 34.

lives of holiness and by announcing the truth that “Humanity is loved by God!”<sup>112</sup> In *Christifideles Laici*, John Paul teaches that the New Evangelization depends upon well formed, co-responsible, faithful laity who strive through lives of holiness to heal the fabric of society and announce the love of God for all humanity.

### ***Redemptoris Missio***

In 1990, John Paul II presents *Redemptoris Missio*, “On the Permanent Validity of the Church’s Missionary Mandate,” written in many ways as a corrective to post-conciliar tensions and controversy regarding the nature and purpose of missionary activity.<sup>113</sup> It is an urgent call to all Christians to renew the missionary activity of the Church<sup>114</sup> by fulfilling the obligation of evangelizing the whole world and embracing the mission of Christ in the fullest sense, comprehensively. The document consists of eight chapters that deal with multiple topics in a comprehensive and interrelated way.<sup>115</sup> Written fifteen years after *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, it is John Paul II’s blueprint for evangelization toward, into, and beyond the new millennium. It places the New Evangelization into the larger context of the overall mission of Christ to redeem the world, and frames the issue of missionary activity and the Church’s participation in the *Missio Dei* in terms of three distinct situations. The first situation is that “in which Christ and his Gospel are not known, or which lack Christian communities sufficiently mature to be able to

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<sup>112</sup> *Christifideles Laici* 34.

<sup>113</sup> For a good synopsis of this issue, see Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 633-638.

<sup>114</sup> *Redemptoris Missio* 2.

<sup>115</sup> *Redemptoris Missio* consists of eight chapters: Chapter 1: Jesus Christ the Only Savior. Chapter 2: The Kingdom of God. Chapter 3: The Holy Spirit, the Principle Agent of Mission. Chapter 4: The Vast Horizons of the Mission *Ad Gentes*. Chapter 5: The Paths of Mission, Chapter 6: Leaders and Workers in the Missionary Apostolate, Chapter 7: Cooperation in Missionary Activity, Chapter 8: Missionary Spirituality.

incarnate the faith in their own environment and proclaim it to other groups.”<sup>116</sup> This is the situation that necessitates the *missio ad gentes* and is contrasted with the second situation, where “Christian communities with adequate and solid ecclesial structures...bear witness to the Gospel in their surroundings and have a sense of commitment to the universal mission... [and] carries out her activity and pastoral care.”<sup>117</sup> This situation, in which the Church is already planted, still needs missionary and evangelizing attention, but not in the same way as the third situation necessitates. The third situation is “an intermediate situation, particularly in countries with ancient Christian roots, and occasionally in the younger Churches as well, where entire groups of the baptized have lost a living sense of the faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the Roman Catholic Church, and live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel. In this case what is needed is a new evangelization or a re-evangelization.”<sup>118</sup> By noting that “there are a diversity of activities in the Church’s one mission” that come from “a variety of circumstances in which the mission is carried out,”<sup>119</sup> John Paul shows that the New Evangelization is driven by the needs of the people to receive the Gospel message.

### ***Tertio Millenio Adveniente and Special Assemblies***

In addition to the points made in the five addresses and documents already presented, another aspect of the New Evangelization in the pontificate of John Paul II is found in the way he leads the Church toward the new millennium through the celebration of the Jubilee Year 2000.

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<sup>116</sup> *Redemptoris Missio* 33.

<sup>117</sup> *Redemptoris Missio* 33.

<sup>118</sup> *Redemptoris Missio* 33.

<sup>119</sup> *Redemptoris Missio* 33.

In *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*,<sup>120</sup> John Paul II reminds his reader, “Since the publication of the very first document of my pontificate, I have spoken explicitly of the Great Jubilee, suggesting that the time be lived as ‘a new advent’...in fact, preparing for the Year 2000 has been as it were a hermeneutical key of my Pontificate.”<sup>121</sup> In the apostolic letter, John Paul outlines his desire for the Church to enter into an immediate preparatory period to celebrate the two-thousandth anniversary of the Incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ, Savior of the world.<sup>122</sup> The Jubilee Year is a missionary initiative because it celebrates the fact that the Redeemer of the world, who is the fulfillment of the yearnings of all the world’s religions,<sup>123</sup> invites all people to redemption. God seeks out humanity through the Church and invites all people to participate in the life of God, to enter into redemption through Christ. The significance of the Jubilee for each member of the Church is found in the reality that “Jesus, who is the same yesterday and today and forever,” (Hebrews 13:8) is to be *proclaimed* by every Christian. In preparing for the new millennium, John Paul II holds up as eminently important an adherence to the documents of the Second Vatican Council<sup>124</sup> and the use of the structure of Synod of Bishops<sup>125</sup> established by it. He affirms that each of the synods since the council had as their underlying theme the New

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<sup>120</sup> John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (On Preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000), November 10, 1994, Vatican Website, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_10111994\\_tertio-millennio-adveniente\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_10111994_tertio-millennio-adveniente_en.html) (accessed April 18, 2014).

<sup>121</sup> *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* 23.

<sup>122</sup> See Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 743-744.

<sup>123</sup> *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* 6.

<sup>124</sup> *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* 20.

<sup>125</sup> *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* 21.

Evangelization.<sup>126</sup> In *Tertio Millenio Adveniente*, John Paul calls for a continuation of the synods, specifically the continental synods, or special assemblies, in which the bishops of a continent gather to discuss the question of the New Evangelization within their specific continent.

Between 1991 and 2003, six post-synodal apostolic exhortations were issued by John Paul II representing six special assemblies directly related to the preparation for the Jubilee Year 2000. Two of the special assemblies, Europe in 1991 and Africa in 1994, took place prior to the promulgation of *Tertio Millenio Adveniente*. Four special assemblies took place in direct response to it. Each of the assemblies have as their starting point the notion of an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ and a topic germane to the New Evangelization in preparation for the new millennium for the particular region of the world represented.

The First Special Assembly for Europe treated the topic *So That We Might Be Witnesses For Christ Who Has Set Us Free*, and represented the Holy Father's concern for the unity of Europe after the great events of the late 1980's.<sup>127</sup> The Holy Father desired the synod to "discern the *kairos* of the given moment...and to consider the role of the Church in the efforts on the continent towards renewal and reconstruction."<sup>128</sup> The Special Assembly for Africa,<sup>129</sup> which

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<sup>126</sup> *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* 21. John Paul II writes: "The theme underlying them all is evangelization, or rather the new evangelization...These synods themselves are part of the new evangelization: they were born of the Second Vatican Council's vision of the Church."

<sup>127</sup> Synod of Bishops, *Synodal Information, Part V: Summary of the Various Synodal Assemblies, Section 12: First Synodal Assembly for Europe*, Vatican Website, updated May 2004, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia//synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_20050309\\_documentation-profile\\_en.html#V.\\_SUMMARY\\_OF\\_THE\\_SYNOD\\_ASSEMBLIES](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia//synod/documents/rc_synod_20050309_documentation-profile_en.html#V._SUMMARY_OF_THE_SYNOD_ASSEMBLIES) (accessed April 18, 2014).

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Synod of Bishops, *Synodal Information, Part V: Summary of the Various Synodal Assemblies, Section 13: Special Assembly for Africa*, Vatican Website, updated May 2004, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia//synod/documents](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia//synod/documents)

took place in 1994, discussed the topic *The Church in Africa and her Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000: “You Shall Be My Witnesses” (Acts 1:8)*. This post-synodal exhortation examines the historical context of the church in Africa, including the phases of missionary and evangelizing activities on the continent. The current situation and future challenges are recognized. Guidelines for the New Evangelization, with particular focus on proclamation of the message, inculturation, dialogue, justice and peace, and means of social communication are outlined.<sup>130</sup> The overall issue of hope as a key element of evangelization in the midst and memory of poverty, suffering, and war is treated.<sup>131</sup> The topic of the Special Assembly for America<sup>132</sup> that took place in 1997 is *Encounter with the Living Jesus Christ: The Way to Conversion, Communion and Solidarity in America*. This assembly considers “the various features of Church life and society on the American continent and sought the best ways and means of allowing the people of America to encounter Jesus Christ.”<sup>133</sup> The post synodal exhortation affirms that the effectiveness of the New Evangelization depends upon the personal encounter of each person with Jesus Christ, and that the fruit of the encounter leads along the paths of conversion, communion, and solidarity with others. The Special Assembly in Asia,<sup>134</sup>

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/rc\_synod\_20050309\_documentation-profile\_en.html#V.\_SUMMARY\_OF\_THE\_SYNOD\_ASSEMBLIES (accessed April 18, 2014).

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Synod of Bishops, *Synodal Information, Part V: Summary of the Various Synodal Assemblies, Section 16: Special Assembly for America*, Vatican Website, updated May 2004, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_20050309\\_documentation-profile\\_en.html#V.\\_SUMMARY\\_OF\\_THE\\_SYNOD\\_ASSEMBLIES](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_20050309_documentation-profile_en.html#V._SUMMARY_OF_THE_SYNOD_ASSEMBLIES) (accessed April 18, 2014).

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Synod of Bishops, *Synodal Information, Part V: Summary of the Various Synodal Assemblies, Section 17: Special Assembly for Asia*, Vatican Website, updated May 2004, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_20050309\\_documentation-profile\\_en.html#V.\\_SUMMARY\\_OF\\_THE\\_SYNOD\\_ASSEMBLIES](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_20050309_documentation-profile_en.html#V._SUMMARY_OF_THE_SYNOD_ASSEMBLIES) (accessed April 18, 2014).

which took place in 1998 focuses on “the uniqueness of Jesus as Savior and his gift of abundant life”<sup>135</sup> in the context of the birthplace of some of the Great Religions of the World.<sup>136</sup> Particular attention was given to the relation of witness and service<sup>137</sup> to mission and on dialogue and communion<sup>138</sup> as constitutive elements of mission and evangelization. The topic of the assembly was *Jesus Christ the Savior and His Mission of Love and Service in Asia: “...That They May Have Life, and Have it Abundantly” (John 10:10)*. In response to *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, the bishops of Oceania participated in a special assembly under the topic *Jesus Christ and the Peoples of Oceania: Walking His Way, Telling His Truth, Living His Life*.<sup>139</sup> The assembly addresses topics, such as “inculturation of the Gospel in a variety of context, renewal of catechesis and formation, revitalization of the faith of believers and the pastoral care of the youth, migrants and indigenous peoples.”<sup>140</sup> The overarching focus of the bishops is a desire to frame the New Evangelization in terms of *communio* in the face of struggle for unity and identity.<sup>141</sup> The Second Special Assembly for Europe,<sup>142</sup> which took place in the year 1999,

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<sup>135</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia: Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Jesus Christ the Saviour and His Mission of Love and Service in Asia*, Vatican Website, November 6, 1999, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_06111999\\_ecclesia-in-asia\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_06111999_ecclesia-in-asia_en.html), Ch. 2;4 (accessed April 18, 2014).

<sup>136</sup> *Ecclesia in Asia* Ch.2.

<sup>137</sup> *Ecclesia in Asia* Ch.6-7.

<sup>138</sup> *Ecclesia in Asia* Ch 5.

<sup>139</sup> Synod of Bishops, *Synodal Information, Part V: Summary of the Various Synodal Assemblies, Section 18: Special Assembly for Oceania*, Vatican Website, updated May 2004, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_20050309\\_documentation-profile\\_en.html#V.\\_SUMMARY\\_OF\\_THE\\_SYNOD\\_ASSEMBLIES](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_20050309_documentation-profile_en.html#V._SUMMARY_OF_THE_SYNOD_ASSEMBLIES) (accessed April 18, 2014).

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> *Ecclesia in Oceania*, 9-10.

recognizes the “new social and cultural situation existent on the continent in the wake of political changes in the East”<sup>143</sup> which had created particular pastoral challenges. In an effort to emphasize the presence of the Church in the history of Europe and to affirm Jesus Christ and his Church as the way of hope for the future, the synod took up the topic *Jesus Christ, Alive in His Church, Source of Hope for Europe*.

All the assemblies taken together teach that the beginning point of the New Evangelization is an encounter with Jesus Christ that leads to a relationship with him in the Church. This leads to a desire within the evangelized to share the experience with others and to draw them into communion with God. Each particular context presents a variety of cultures, circumstances, challenges, and graces. The New Evangelization, specifically in the preparation for celebrating the Jubilee Year 2000, necessitates a wide range of responses based on the particular context of those being evangelized.

### **Summary**

This chapter has surveyed the Church’s evolving understanding of the term *evangelization* from an historical perspective. It has been shown that focus has shifted from the *missio ad gentes* to the New Evangelization. This shift has taken into account the need to evangelize the world in a new way because a new situation requires a new ardor, expression, and methods. The New Evangelization, flowing naturally out of the Second Vatican Council and, as first specifically proposed by Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, has its primary architect in John

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<sup>142</sup> Synod of Bishops, *Synodal Information, Part V: Summary of the Various Synodal Assemblies, Section 19: Second Special Assembly for Europe*, Vatican Website, updated May 2004, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_20050309\\_documentation-profile\\_en.html#V.\\_SUMMARY\\_OF\\_THE\\_SYNOD\\_ASSEMBLIES](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_20050309_documentation-profile_en.html#V._SUMMARY_OF_THE_SYNOD_ASSEMBLIES) (accessed April 18, 2014).

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.



Paul II. Through his entire pontificate and leading up to the Jubilee year 2000, John Paul II made the New Evangelization his primary initiative. The Synod of Bishops, at John Paul II's request, treated the question of the New Evangelization at the local level through a series of continental synods or special assemblies, each of which produced documents to follow for implementing the New Evangelization at the local level and how that movement then influenced the universal Church. Since the dawn of a new millennium and the passing of John Paul II, the pontificate of Benedict XVI and the Synod of the New Evangelization have provided continuing development of understanding of the New Evangelization, the subject of the next chapter.

## **Chapter Two**

### **New Times Call for New Approaches: The New Evangelization More Deeply Understood**

“When the Samaritans came to him, they invited him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. Many more began to believe in him because of his word, and they said to the [Samaritan] woman, ‘We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world.’” (John 4:40-42)

Chapter One focuses on the evolution of the term “evangelization” in general and the term “New Evangelization” in particular from the period of Benedict XV to John Paul II. The present chapter continues to look at the Church’s understanding of the New Evangelization from the perspective provided by Benedict XVI and by the Synod of the New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Faith. The first part of the chapter will bring together five moments in the pontificate of Benedict XVI, each of which provide insight into how the New Evangelization is to be understood in the life of the Church today. The second part of the chapter will treat the four major documents of the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops from October 7-28, 2012.

#### **Benedict XVI**

Five moments in the pontificate of Benedict XVI are presented to provide insight into how the New Evangelization is to be understood in the Church today: (1) the homily for the inauguration of his pontificate; (2) the Christmas address to the Roman Curia in 2005; (3) the approval of the *Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization* in 2007; (4) the establishment of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization and announcement of the Year of Faith in 2010 and 2011, respectively; and (5) the Meditation on Evangelization during the First General Congregation of the XIII Ordinary General Synod of Bishops in 2012. These five moments point out five basic insights into understanding the New Evangelization: (1) the basis

of the New Evangelization is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ; (2) the New Evangelization requires a hermeneutic of reform; (3) the New Evangelization necessitates a correct understanding of the relationship between mission and respect for the conscience and religious freedom of all peoples; (4) the New Evangelization, based in the simplicity of faith, is a permanent aspect of the life of the Church; (5) the New Evangelization is a new Pentecost beginning with confession of faith in God and expressed in charity.

### **Homily at Inauguration of Pontificate**

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger was elected to the pontificate and inaugurated as Pope Benedict XVI on April 24, 2005, after the beloved Pope Saint John Paul II's long and public sickness and death. On the occasion, Benedict XVI repeats the words of John Paul II and invites the world: "Do not be afraid! Open wide the doors to Christ!"<sup>144</sup> In doing so, Benedict himself takes up the same missionary impulse expressed by John Paul II at his inauguration, and reaffirms the centrality of a relationship with Christ as the basis of all evangelization. He preaches that only in friendship with Christ "is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation."<sup>145</sup> Benedict XVI also witnesses to the world his own personal relationship with Jesus. He says:

"And so, today, with great strength and great conviction, *on the basis of long personal experience of life* (emphasis added), I say to you, dear young people: Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything.

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<sup>144</sup> Benedict XVI, "Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI: Mass for the Inauguration of the Pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI", Vatican Website, April 24, 2005, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/homilies/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20050424\\_inizio-pontificato\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20050424_inizio-pontificato_en.html) (accessed April 14, 2014).

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ – and you will find true life. Amen.”<sup>146</sup>

In one of his first evangelizing opportunities as Pope, Benedict XVI proposes a personal relationship with Jesus as the starting point of evangelization and witnesses to the world his own friendship with Jesus.

### **Address to Roman Curia, Christmas 2005**

Six months after his election, Benedict XVI takes the opportunity during the Christmas Address to the Roman Curia<sup>147</sup> to reflect upon the past year’s events, especially the celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council. In the course of the address, Benedict XVI asks the same question raised by John Paul II in *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*: “What has been the result of the Council? Was it well received... Why has the implementation of the Council, in large parts of the Church, thus far been so difficult?”<sup>148</sup> In his answer, Benedict embarks upon a long discourse regarding the correct interpretation of the Council documents with a “hermeneutic of reform”<sup>149</sup> that is contrasted with a “hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture.”<sup>150</sup> A hermeneutic of discontinuity, he writes, “asserts that the texts of the Council as such do not yet express the true spirit of the Council,”<sup>151</sup> and therefore it would be

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Benedict XVI, “Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Roman Curia Offering them his Christmas Greetings”, Vatican Website, December 22, 2005, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2005/december/documents/hf\\_ben\\_xvi\\_spe\\_20051222\\_roman-curia\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/december/documents/hf_ben_xvi_spe_20051222_roman-curia_en.html) (accessed April 14, 2014).

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

“necessary not to follow the texts of the Council but its spirit.”<sup>152</sup> This approach in interpretation, Benedict XVI argues, reveals a misunderstanding about the nature of the Council and misrepresents the intention of John XXIII to both “guard this precious treasure”<sup>153</sup> of magisterial teaching and to present it anew in “faithful and perfect conformity to the authentic doctrine...through the methods of research and through the literary forms of modern thought.”<sup>154</sup> Benedict XVI recognizes that the imperative given by John XXIII is very difficult: to express specific truths in a new way with faithfulness to the unchanging principles contained in Tradition.<sup>155</sup> Benedict XVI notes the connection focused on by the Council between lived experience and reflection upon faith.<sup>156</sup> In the discourse, Benedict XVI recognizes three fields important to the relationship between the Church and the modern era in which a correct hermeneutical key is imperative: (1) the relationship between faith and science; (2) the relationship between Church and the modern State; and (3) the relationship between the Christian faith and world religions as understood as the “problem of religious tolerance.”<sup>157</sup> These three topics of the Council are only correctly understood from a perspective informed by a hermeneutics of reform, which inevitably leads to a conformity between the lived experience of

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> John XXIII, “Address of Pope John XXIII Opening the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, St Peter’s Basilica”, Vatican II Voice of the Church Website, October 11, 1962, [http://www.vatican2voice.org/91docs/opening\\_speech.htm](http://www.vatican2voice.org/91docs/opening_speech.htm), sec. 2 (accessed April 14, 2014).

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Benedict XVI, *Christmas Address to Roman Curia*, 2005: “It is clear that this commitment to expressing a specific truth in a new way demands new thinking on this truth and a new and vital relationship with it; it is also clear that new words can only develop if they come from an informed understanding of the truth expressed, and on the other hand, that a reflection on faith also requires that this faith be lived. In this regard, the programme that Pope John XXIII proposed was extremely demanding, indeed, just as the synthesis of fidelity and dynamic is demanding.”

<sup>156</sup> Benedict XVI, *Christmas Address to Roman Curia*, 2005: “...a reflection on faith also requires that this faith be lived.”

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

faith and dialogue and reflection. Benedict XVI points out the need for increased authentic dialogue between the Church and the modern era, a dialogue that is very important to the work of the New Evangelization because it pertains in large part to the “subjects” of the New Evangelization. It pertains in large part to those for whom the Church “does” the New Evangelization: those who have fallen away from the regular practice of the faith, the alienated, non-practicing Catholic.

### **Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of the New Evangelization**

Approximately two years after the Christmas address, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a *Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization*, approved by Benedict XVI, adopted and published on October 6, 2007. This *Note* takes up the issue of “the relationship between the missionary command of the Lord and respect for the conscience and religious freedom of all people”<sup>158</sup> in order to clarify certain aspects of the subject that have anthropological, ecclesiological, and ecumenical implications. By approving the *Note*, Benedict XVI asserts the importance of interpreting these issues with a hermeneutic of reform and continuity. According to the *Note*, the broad term evangelization “sums up the Church’s entire mission,”<sup>159</sup> including the proclamation and handing on of the Gospel to all humanity. “To evangelize,” the *Note* states, “does not mean simply to teach a doctrine, but to proclaim Jesus Christ by one’s words and actions, that is, to make oneself an instrument of his presence and action in the world.”<sup>160</sup> Because people have a right to the Gospel, each Christian is duty-bound

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<sup>158</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “*Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization*”, Vatican Website, October 6, 20047, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20071203\\_nota-evangelizzazione\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20071203_nota-evangelizzazione_en.html), sec. 3, (accessed April 14, 2014).

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid*.

to proclaim it in this way. Several important anthropological, ecclesiological, and ecumenical implications of a correct understanding of mission in relation to religious freedom and conscience are presented in the *Note*. A correct understanding of religious freedom and missionary activity accepts the fact that they are not opposed to each other but actually enhance one another. Evangelization presupposes religious freedom for the one doing the missionary activity as well as the one to whom it is addressed. As the *Note* indicates, true freedom is seen in light of the gift of truth: “the fullness of the gift of truth, which God makes by revealing himself to man, respects the freedom which he himself created as an indelible mark of human nature: a freedom which is not indifference, but which is rather directed towards truth.”<sup>161</sup> Evangelization and ecumenical or interreligious dialogue, far from being in opposition, go hand in hand because their common end is that the human person come to the truth. When those engaged in these activities have authentic respect for religious freedom and of conscience, they contribute to the faith and freedom of all those involved. Listening, theological discussion, dialogue, witness, and proclamation are all forms of ecumenical activity that, while respecting the freedom of religion and conscience, builds up those who engage in them. This point is important to the New Evangelization because many Catholics have fallen away from the regular practice of the faith because they perceive a contradiction between Church teaching on salvation and religious freedom. They see evangelization as somehow doing violence toward the person’s religious freedom. The New Evangelization proposes that evangelizers respect religious freedom and conscience, while at the same time enthusiastically proclaiming the Gospel in its entirety by

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid, 10.

presenting the faith in word and action. The Gospel message is proposed for people to freely embrace, never imposed with force.<sup>162</sup>

### **Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization and the Year of Faith**

In 2010 and 2011, respectively, Benedict XVI establishes the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization and announces the Year of Faith. By these two actions, he emphasizes that the New Evangelization is a permanent aspect of the life of the Church and that it finds its most basic identity in the simplicity of faith. The apostolic letter *Ubicumque et Semper*, in which the Pontifical Council is established, outlines the prevailing state of affairs by recognizing the need for renewed evangelization, based in an authentic faith on the part of believers. Benedict recognizes the abandonment of faith prevalent in the modern era,<sup>163</sup> and the emptiness that so many people experience as a result of it.<sup>164</sup> He also recognizes that, in order to experience renewal and effectively do the New Evangelization, the Church must move from “evangelized to evangelizing,”<sup>165</sup> and that this presupposes an authentic faith on the part of each member of the Church. “At the root of all evangelization,” he writes, “lies not a human plan of expansion, but rather the desire to share the inestimable gift that God has willed to give us,

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<sup>162</sup> It must be noted that in the history of the Church this approach has not always prevailed. Rather, at times, ministers of the Church have used force, coercion, even violence to impose participation in the Church. These historical realities are a source of sorrow and prove to remind all Christians of the freedom to embrace the Faith in right conscience.

<sup>163</sup> Benedict XVI, “*Ubicumque et Semper: Apostolic Letter in the Form of Moto Proprio of the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI Establishing the pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization*”, Vatican Website, September 21, 2010, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_apl\\_20100921\\_ubicumque-et-semper\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_letters/documents/hf_ben-xvi_apl_20100921_ubicumque-et-semper_en.html) (accessed April 14, 2014).

<sup>164</sup> *Ubicumque et Semper*

<sup>165</sup> *Ubicumque et Semper*



making us sharers in his own life.”<sup>166</sup> *Porta Fidei*, announcing the Year of Faith, proposes that “[t]he ‘door of faith’ (Acts 14:27) is always open,”<sup>167</sup> and that those who “rediscover the journey of faith so as to shed ever clearer light on the joy and renewed enthusiasm of the encounter with Christ”<sup>168</sup> become themselves leaders in drawing others to faith. Benedict XVI calls for stronger commitment to evangelizing based on “the joy of believing and the enthusiasm for communicating the faith.”<sup>169</sup> By establishing the Pontifical Council and announcing the Year of Faith, Benedict XVI reemphasizes that the simplicity of faith is at the center of evangelization, and that the New Evangelization is an integral part of the Church.

### **Meditation on Evangelization, First General Congregation of the Synod for the New Evangelization**

The last insight from Benedict XVI to be presented is that which is gained from his *Meditation during the First General Congregation of the Synod for the New Evangelization*,<sup>170</sup> in which he reflects upon the meaning of the word *evangelization* and upon the hymn for *Terce* Prayer entitled *Nunc Sancte, Nobis Spiritus*. In the *Meditation*, Benedict XVI reflects upon how the New Evangelization is to be understood as a new Pentecost involving the confession of the gift of faith in God, expressed in charity. The *Meditation*, just like so much of Benedict XVI’s

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<sup>166</sup> *Ubi cumque et Semper*

<sup>167</sup> Benedict XVI, “*Porta Fidei: Apostolic Letter ‘Moto Proprio Data’ of the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI for the Indiction of the Year of Faith*”, Vatican Website, October 11, 2011, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/motu\\_proprio/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_motu-proprio\\_20111011\\_porta-fidei\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/motu_proprio/documents/hf_ben-xvi_motu-proprio_20111011_porta-fidei_en.html), sec. 1 (accessed April 14, 2014).

<sup>168</sup> *Porta Fidei* 2.

<sup>169</sup> *Porta Fidei* 7.

<sup>170</sup> Benedict XVI, “*Meditation of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI during the First General Congregation, XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops*”, Vatican Website, October 8, 2012, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2012/october/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20121008\\_meditazione-sinodo\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2012/october/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20121008_meditazione-sinodo_en.html) (accessed April 14, 2014).

work, is packed with details and shows his robust intellect and aptitude for teaching and inspiring in ways that lead to action and commitment.

“*Evangelium*,” Benedict XVI teaches, in ancient times such as those of Homer, was “an announcement of victory and therefore the announcement of good, joy and happiness.”<sup>171</sup> In Isaiah, *evangelium* “announces joy from God, who has not forgotten his people. It is an announcement of justice, peace and salvation.”<sup>172</sup> During New Testament times, in the Roman Empire, the word connotes a message specifically from the Emperor that delivers good, renewal and salvation.<sup>173</sup> Luke the Evangelist contrasts the message of the Emperor Augustus with the message of Jesus “the true Emperor of the world [who] has made himself heard, he[who] speaks to us.”<sup>174</sup> The term *evangelium*, therefore, is a word that brings salvation through the existence of the person Jesus Christ, who *is* salvation: “‘Gospel’ means: God has broken silence. God has spoken, God exists. This fact in itself is salvation: God knows us. God loves us, he has entered into history.”<sup>175</sup> The Holy Father asks the question: “how can we communicate this reality to the people of today, so that it becomes salvation”<sup>176</sup> for them? This is the most basic question of the New Evangelization because it asks how the Church is able to proclaim the reality of salvation.

Benedict XVI takes up this question by enlisting the hymn traditionally sung for daytime prayer *Terce: Nunc Sante, nobis, Spiritus*. The hymn goes:

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

*Nunc, Sancte, nobis, Spiritus,  
Unum Patri cum Filio,  
Dignare promptus ingeri  
Nostro refusus pectori.  
  
Os, lingua, mens, sensus, vigor  
Confessionem personent.  
Flammescat igne caritas,  
Accéndat ardor proximos.*

By enlisting the hymn, Benedict points out two aspects of evangelization: (1) it is a new Pentecost initiated by God, and (2) it is an act of confession and of charity. The first stanza calls upon God the Holy Spirit to come into the hearts and souls of those who call upon him, to possess with holiness and presence, with God's very self: *Dignare promptus ingeri, Nostro refusus pectori*. This petition is similar to the one uttered by the apostles at Pentecost in which, initiated by God, the Church was established. Benedict XVI writes: "Pentecost is the condition of the birth of the Church: Only because God acted first, are the apostles able to act with him and make what he does present."<sup>177</sup> The New Evangelization, as a new springtime, is a new Pentecost, in which the Church depends upon God who initiates and in which God "also wants to involve our activity."<sup>178</sup> So, evangelization, rather than being primarily an activity or program of the Church, is a new Pentecost initiated by God, in which the Church participates.

Using the second stanza of the hymn for *Terce*, Benedict XVI outlines two ways through which the Church participates in evangelization: confession and charity. The verse reads: *Os,*

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid. Benedict states: "Therefore, it is important always to know that the first word, the true initiative, the true activity comes from God and only by inserting ourselves into the divine initiative, only by begging for this divine initiative, shall we too be able to become — with him and in him — evangelizers. God is always the beginning, and it is always only he who can make Pentecost, who can create the Church, who can show the reality of his being with us. On the other hand, however, this God, who is always the beginning, also wants to involve our activity, so that the activities are theandric, so to speak, made by God, but with our involvement and implying our being, all our activity."

*lingua, mens, sensus, vigor, confessionem personent, flammescat igne caritas, accendat ardor proximos* Evangelization is an act of confession and an act of charity in which God “makes us act with him, in him and for humanity, for his creation.”<sup>179</sup> The first way, *confessio*, penetrates one’s eyes, tongue, mind, senses and strength. This confession is with one’s whole self, to the point of not only “putting forth a positive presentation of reality,”<sup>180</sup> but by doing so to the extent that one’s life is open to the possibility of suffering, of passion and eventually of martyrdom, which is a verification of true confession.<sup>181</sup> The second way the evangelizer, within the divine initiative, acts with God, in God and for humanity, is through *caritas*. Evangelization calls for a *caritas* which is ardor and flame and which ignites others.<sup>182</sup> The hymn petitions that the *caritas* given to and expressed by the Christian set aflame those around him or her. Benedict XVI observes that when this takes place, it becomes a new Pentecost: “[It] is the way of evangelization: ‘*Accendat ardor proximos*’, so that truth becomes charity in me and charity like

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid. Benedict also notes that it is through two “determinant nouns: ‘*confessio*’ in the first lines, and ‘*caritas*’ in the second two” that the hymn relays this message.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid. The Holy Father notes the distinction between the word *confessio* and *professio*. “Here it is also important to observe a small philological reality: “*confessio*” in pre-Christian Latin would not have been “*confessio*” but “*professio*” (*profiteri*): this is the positive presentation of a reality. Instead, the word “*confessio*” refers to the situation in a court, in a trial where someone opens his mind and confesses.”

<sup>181</sup> Ibid. Benedict XVI elaborates on the martyrological aspect of the word “*confessio*” as distinguished from “*professio*.” He writes: “In other words, this word “confession”, which in Christian Latin replaced the word “*professio*” brings with it the martyrological element, the element of witnessing to faith in front of the enemy, even in situations of passion and of the danger of death. Christian confession essentially involves a willingness to suffer: this seems to me to be very important. Again, in the essence of the “*confessio*” of our Creed, an openness to passion, suffering, indeed, giving up life is implied. And this guarantees credibility: the “*confessio*” is not just something that can be abandoned; the “*confessio*” implies the willingness to give up my life, to accept the passion. This is also truly the verification of the “*confessio*”. It can be seen that for us “*confessio*” is not a word, it is more than pain, it is more than death. For the “*confessio*” it is really worth suffering, it is worth suffering up to death. Whoever makes this “*confessio*” shows in this way that what he confesses is more than life: it is life itself, the treasure, the precious and infinite pearl. And it is in the martyrological aspect of the word “*confessio*” that the truth appears: it comes into being only for a reality for which it is worth suffering, which is stronger than even death, and it demonstrates that I hold the truth in my hand, that I am more than certain that I am “bearing” my life because I find life in this confession.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

fire ignites my neighbor.”<sup>183</sup> In his reflection upon evangelization and the hymn for *Terce*, in which the Church asks for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Benedict XVI frames the New Evangelization in terms of a participation in the life of God. The New Evangelization is understood as a new Pentecost through confession of faith in God and expressed in the possession of and sharing of charity, even unto the ultimate verification of faith: martyrdom.<sup>184</sup>

### **Synod of the New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Faith**

Approximately one month after establishing the Pontifical Council for promoting the New Evangelization, Benedict XVI announced that he wished to dedicate the next ordinary general assembly of the synod of bishops to the specific subject of the New Evangelization and the Transmission of the Faith.<sup>185</sup> The Synod took place in Vatican City from October 7-28, 2012. Like each synod, the preparatory phase and synod assemblies used several documents that are helpful in understanding the content of the synod topics. The *Lineamenta*, *Instrumentum Laboris*, *List of Propositions*, and *Message to the People of God* of the Synod for the New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Faith show the fruit of a universal analysis and presentation of the New Evangelization by the synod participants. Before looking at the synod documents, a look at the synod process that produced them is in order.

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> In modern times, religious persecution and martyrdom still exist. See for example John L. Allen, Jr, *The Global War on Christians: Dispatches from the Front Lines of Anti-Christian Persecution* (New York: Crown, 2013).

<sup>185</sup> Benedict XVI, “Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI: Papal Mass for the Closing of the Special Assembly for the Middle East of the Synod of Bishops”, October 24, 2010, Vatican Web Site, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/homilies/2010/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20101024\\_chiusura-sinodo-mo\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20101024_chiusura-sinodo-mo_en.html) (accessed May 15, 2014).

## Synod Process in General

“The Synod of Bishops process was established by Pope Paul VI in 1965 in response to the desire of the fathers of the Second Vatican Council to keep alive the spirit of collegiality engendered by the council,”<sup>186</sup> and has been used since by the universal church as a means of gathering thought and developing ideas on how to engage the modern world in the issues of the Church.<sup>187</sup> Its primary function is a “service of communion,” with competence to deal with different issues set down by the Holy Father.<sup>188</sup> It is independent of the Roman Curia and is therefore subject directly to the Holy Father.<sup>189</sup> In 1983, John Paul II addressed the Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, in which he gave a summary of the work of the synod, pointed out the difference between the work of a Council and the work of the Synod, and made clear his desire to utilize the Synod of Bishops in his pontificate.<sup>190</sup> In 1994, John Paul II again addressing the General Secretariat, noted that “the movement” of the synod “has widely expanded in the Church,” and called for extended use of the synod for continental synods that

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<sup>186</sup> *The Synod of Bishops, An Introduction*, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_20050309\\_documentation-profile\\_en.html#I.\\_THE\\_SYNOD\\_OF\\_BISHOPS](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_20050309_documentation-profile_en.html#I._THE_SYNOD_OF_BISHOPS) (accessed June 4, 2014).

<sup>187</sup> Paul VI established the synod of bishops through the *moto proprio Apostolica sollicitudo* on the first day of the fourth session of the Second Vatican Council. See Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph A. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, 55-61.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> “The principal characteristic of the Synod of Bishops is service to the communion and collegiality of the world’s bishops with the Holy Father. It is not a particular organism with limited competence as that of the Roman Congregations and Councils. Instead, it has full competence to deal with any subject in accordance with the procedure established by the Holy Father in the letter of convocation. The Synod of Bishops with its permanent General Secretariat is not part of the Roman Curia and does not depend on it; it is subject directly and solely to the Holy Father, with whom it is united in the universal government of the Church.” *The Synod of Bishops: An Introduction*, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_20050309\\_documentation-profile\\_en.html#I.\\_THE\\_SYNOD\\_OF\\_BISHOPS](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_20050309_documentation-profile_en.html#I._THE_SYNOD_OF_BISHOPS) (accessed June 4, 2014).

<sup>190</sup> John Paul II, “Discourse to the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops”, April 30, 1983, Vatican Web site, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_20050309\\_documentation\\_profile\\_en.html#A.\\_Discourse\\_of\\_His\\_Holiness\\_John\\_Paul\\_II\\_to\\_the\\_Council\\_of\\_the\\_General\\_Secretariat\\_of\\_the\\_Synod\\_of\\_Bishops\\_\(30\\_April\\_1983\)](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_20050309_documentation_profile_en.html#A._Discourse_of_His_Holiness_John_Paul_II_to_the_Council_of_the_General_Secretariat_of_the_Synod_of_Bishops_(30_April_1983)) (accessed June 4, 2014).

would lead into the Jubilee year 2000.<sup>191</sup> As has been mentioned, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* outlines this same desire.

### **Synodal Structure**

By way of background, it is important to note that the synod process has several stages. The preparatory stage involves consultation of the various bishops' conferences, Curia, and Superiors General regarding possible subjects for a General synod.<sup>192</sup> Once subject suggestions are given to the Holy Father and one is chosen for a synod, a *Lineamenta*, or "outline" of the subject, is produced and sent to the "Church's episcopate for the purpose of generating at the local level study, discussion and prayer concerning the Synodal topic"<sup>193</sup> Responses to the various topics and questions raised in the *lineamenta* are received by the Council of the General Secretariat who drafts a "working document," or *Instrumentum Laboris*, that is used for the discussions when the participants gather for the synod.<sup>194</sup> The initial discussions are designed to present the "experiences and aspirations of each community as well as the fruit of the preliminary discussions of the Episcopal Conferences," and therefore are representative of each local Church throughout the scope of the synod.<sup>195</sup> During the gatherings interventions are given

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> See *The Synod of Bishops: An Introduction*, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_20050309\\_documentation-profile\\_en.html#IV.\\_NOTES\\_ON\\_THE\\_SYNODAL\\_PROCESS](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_20050309_documentation-profile_en.html#IV._NOTES_ON_THE_SYNODAL_PROCESS) (accessed June 4, 2014).

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid. This "working document", though rendered public, is only a provisional text which will be the object of discussion during the Synod. The document is not a draft of the final conclusions but only a text which aims at helping to focus discussion on the Synod topic.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

by each member regarding the topic at hand, the Rapporteur<sup>196</sup> of the Synod formulates points for discussion based on the interventions, and small groups gather based on language to formulate suggestions and observations as regards the topic.<sup>197</sup> *A Message to the People of God* at the conclusion of the synod and an integrated *List of Propositions* are written and presented to the Holy Father as the fruit of the Synod.<sup>198</sup> The process of the synod is a “method of work that alternates between analysis and synthesis, in consulting interested parties and decisions being made by competent authorities, according to a dynamic of feed-back which permits the continual verification of results and the making of new proposals. Each step of this process takes place within the climate of collegial communion.”<sup>199</sup> The synodal process was implemented for the Synod of Bishops for the New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith (from here forward: “*Synod*”) which met in Rome from October 11-28, 2012.

### *Lineamenta*

The *Lineamenta* of the *Synod* consists of an introduction, three chapters with accompanying questions for reflection, and a conclusion. A preface, written by the General Secretary, relates the overall purpose for which the *Synod* was called: (1) to examine the present situation, (2) to trace new methods and means for transmitting the Gospel, and (3) to renew enthusiasm for evangelization.<sup>200</sup> The Introduction points out the urgency and duty of the

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<sup>196</sup> The Rapporteur is the person responsible for gathering reports and distributing them to the various members of the Synod.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Synod of Bishops, “*Lineamenta: Synod of Bishops XIII Ordinary General Assembly*”, The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith, Vatican Website, February 2, 2011, <http://www.vatican.va/>



Church to engage in the New Evangelization. In this context, it points out a particular dynamic present in the activity of evangelization: that an assessment of the present situation will not only show what broad areas need to be re-worked in terms of evangelizing programs or approaches, but also has the potential to inform each member of the Church at a deeper level about their own faith life. A re-assessment of the Church's approach to evangelization will help each member "to ascertain the calibre of our faith, to determine our sense of 'feeling' and 'being' Christians and disciples of Jesus Christ."<sup>201</sup> The first chapter of the *Lineamenta* addresses the content and need of the New Evangelization from an historical, spiritual, and ecclesiological point of view, and points out the various sectors which call for the new evangelization: (1) cultural, (2) social, (3) social communication, (4) economic, (5) scientific and technological, and (6) civic and political. Into each of these sectors, the Church is called to enter with the message of hope and joy, confident that what she proclaims is true. The plan for a self-assessment, necessary for evaluating the needs in each sector, must at the same time "raise the question of God in the

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roman\_curia/synod/documents/rc\_synod\_doc\_20110202\_lineamenta-xiii-assembly\_en.html, Preface (accessed April 16, 2014). The preface reads: "*Continuing the reflection which has taken place thus far on the subject, the aim of the approaching synodal assembly will be to examine the present situation in the particular Churches and to trace, in communion with the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, the Bishop of Rome and Universal Pastor of the Church, the new methods and means for transmitting the Good News to people in our world today with a renewed enthusiasm proper to the saints, who were joyous witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ "who is and who was and who is to come" (Rev 4:8).*"

<sup>201</sup> Ibid, 3. The *Lineamenta* asserts that an assessment of the present situation will not only show what areas need to be re-worked in terms of evangelizing programs or approaches, but will also get at the deeper level. A re-assessment of the church's approach to evangelization will also help the church "to ascertain the calibre of our faith, to determine our sense of "feeling" and "being" Christians and disciples of Jesus Christ": "This question from the conclusion of *Evangelii nuntiandi* could serve as an exegesis of the opening quote from St. Paul. It also allows us to go immediately to the heart of the subject-at-hand, namely, the absolute centrality of the task of evangelization for the Church today. A reassessment of our experiences and attitudes concerning evangelization, not simply at the practical level, will lead to an improvement in our practice and approach to proclamation. On a deeper level, this process will allow us to ascertain the calibre of our faith, to determine our sense of "feeling" and "being" Christians and disciples of Jesus Christ, who are sent forth to proclaim him to the world, and of our being witnesses filled with the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk 24:48ff; Acts 1:8) and called to make disciples of all nations (cf. Mt 28:19ff).

context,”<sup>202</sup> and show “how the Christian perspective enlightens, in an unprecedented way, the great problems of history.”<sup>203</sup> The second chapter, *Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ*, points out that the starting point and goal of all evangelization is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ in the Church. The method of transmitting the faith in evangelization is to create the condition for individuals to have a personal encounter with Jesus.<sup>204</sup> In order to create the conditions for others to encounter Christ, the Christian must first believe in and live in Christ. This “being” with Jesus forms the basis for an authentic witness to the faith, the contrary of which proves that “[w]hat is not believed or lived cannot be transmitted”<sup>205</sup> The holy Word of God as contained in Sacred Scripture<sup>206</sup> and the living tradition of the faith both contribute to the encounter.<sup>207</sup> Catechesis and lived experience form the pedagogy for transmitting the faith,<sup>208</sup> and local churches and individuals, as agents of the transmission,<sup>209</sup> do so through rendering an account of faith through personal witness.<sup>210</sup> The third chapter, *Initiation into the Christian*

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid, 11. “Transmitting the faith means to create in every place and time the conditions for this personal encounter of individuals with Jesus Christ. The faith-encounter with the person of Jesus Christ is a relationship with him, “remembering him” (in the Eucharist) and, through the grace of the Spirit, having in us the mind of Jesus Christ.”

<sup>205</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>206</sup> The theme of the XII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops which met in October 2008 is *The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church*. Pope Benedict XVI presented the Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* on September 30, 2010. Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini: Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation*, September 30, 2010, Vatican Website, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_exh\\_20100930\\_verbum-domini\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20100930_verbum-domini_en.html) (accessed April 16, 2014).

<sup>207</sup> *Lineamenta: Synod for the New Evangelization*, 13.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid, 16.

*Experience*, focuses on the process of evangelizing and the transmission of the faith, the initial proclamation and the need for new forms of discourse on God, the role of educators, the means of education, and the value of witness in evangelization.<sup>211</sup> The Conclusion makes note of the connection between evangelizing and the gift of the Spirit given at Pentecost. In this context it affirms that the content of the New Evangelization is not a “‘new Gospel’, because ‘Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever’ (*Heb* 13:8), but rather, a new response to the needs of humanity and people today in a manner adapted to the signs of the times and to the new situations in cultures.”<sup>212</sup> It concludes that the New Evangelization is to be approached with a spirit of enthusiasm and hope.<sup>213</sup> At the end of each section of the *Lineamenta* are questions for each local church to consider in preparing their particular response. The responses, sent to the General Secretary for the Synod, are summarized and used to compose the *Instrumentum Laboris*,<sup>214</sup> the document used during the Synod assembly for discussion.

### ***Instrumentum Laboris***

The *Instrumentum Laboris* consists of an introduction and conclusion with four main chapters. The Introduction notes that the Year of Faith is the point of reference for the Synod and notes the connection of the Synod with the Second Vatican Council as regards the mission of the Church. The expectation of the Synod is two-fold: (1) to be a source of encouragement, and (2) to share and compare experiences and observations regarding the situations and approaches

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<sup>211</sup> See *Ibid*, 18-22.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid*, 24-25.

<sup>214</sup> Synod of Bishops, “*Instrumentum Laboris: Synod of Bishops XIII Ordinary General Assembly*”, The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith, Vatican Website, May 27, 2012, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_20120619\\_instrumentum-xiii\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20120619_instrumentum-xiii_en.html) (accessed April 16, 2014).

of local churches.<sup>215</sup> The first chapter focuses on the “heart of evangelization,” the encounter with the person of Jesus Christ through the experience of faith.<sup>216</sup> This chapter notes that through an encounter with Jesus, who is the first evangelizer, each member of the Church becomes an evangelizing force himself or herself. Likewise, it is through the exercise of this duty to evangelize that the Church as a whole renews the world and at the same time is herself renewed.<sup>217</sup> The second chapter focuses on “discerning the changes which affect how we live out faith and which influence our Christian communities,”<sup>218</sup> and addresses the question of the “New Evangelization” in terms of the various sectors in which it is exercised. It distinguishes between the various “subjects” of evangelization and draws upon magisterial documents to distinguish between the mission *ad gentes* and the mission of the new evangelization.<sup>219</sup> The third chapter “treats the basic places, means, persons and activities involved in the transmission of the Catholic faith”<sup>220</sup> and the role of the Church as an instrument of this activity. The

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<sup>215</sup> “The convocation of the Synod is seen as a timely opportunity for the entire Catholic Church to listen, discern and, above all, give a unified response to what we are called to do. Hopefully, the upcoming synodal assembly will be an event to energize Christian communities and, at the same time, provide concrete answers to the many questions facing the Church today and the resources available in her evangelizing activity. The Synod is expected to be not only a source of encouragement but also the place to compare experiences and share observations on situations and approaches for action.” *Instrumentum laboris, Synod for the New Evangelization* 5.

<sup>216</sup> *Instrumentum Laboris, Synod for the New Evangelization* 17.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid*, 18-40.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid*, 17.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid*, 40-89. Specific to the question of the definition of the new evangelization, see IL, 85-89 which makes reference to the establishment of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, the magisterial teachings under the pontificate of Benedict XVI and the work of the Synod in order to show a development in the use of the term “New Evangelization.” It concludes that “The new evangelization is also the name given to a spiritual reawakening and the reanimation of a process of conversion which the Church asks of herself, all her communities and all the baptized. Consequently, this reality is *not the concern of well-defined regions only*, but the means to explain everywhere the teaching of the Apostles and put those teachings into practice in our day. Through the new evangelization, the Church seeks to insert the very original and specific character of her teachings into today's world and everyday discussion.” *Instrumentum laboris* 88.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid*, 17.

expression of faith, according to a specific pedagogy, is outlined by the very structure of the Catechism of the Catholic Church<sup>221</sup> and gives form to the reality of faith that produces the life giving fruits of the Gospel.<sup>222</sup> The fourth chapter discusses “areas of pastoral activity”<sup>223</sup> and the need to “revivify”<sup>224</sup> the activity of the Church within these areas. The conclusion reaffirms the need to evangelize from a posture of confidence that God will provide the same grace given to the first apostles at Pentecost in the work of the New Evangelization and that because “Jesus is the same yesterday, and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:9), the New Evangelization means, not a changing of the Gospel but “an adequate response to the signs of the times, to the needs of individuals and people of today and to the new sectors with their cultures through which we express our identity and the meaning of our lives.”<sup>225</sup>

At the conclusion of the Synod, the General Secretary and participants produce two documents as the fruit of the Synod and which serve as a potential source for writing a post

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<sup>221</sup> The Catechism of the Catholic Church holds within its very structure “the pedagogy for transmitting the Faith which is developed according to the four major divisions of the Roman Catechism: the Creed, the sacraments, the commandments and the Lord's Prayer. On one side are the mysteries of faith in God, One-in-Three, as they are professed (The Symbol of the Faith) and celebrated (sacraments); and on the other, human life in conformity with that faith (a faith which becomes operative through love) which is realized in a Christian way of life (the Decalogue) and filial prayer (Our Father). See L.I., 100. Here, we see that faith must be “professed, celebrated, lived and prayed.” (Benedict XVI, “*Apostolic Letter motu proprio Porta Fidei, Proclaiming The Year of Faith*”, (11 October 2011), 9: AAS 103 (2011) 728.)

<sup>222</sup> *Instrumentum laboris, Synod for the New Evangelization* 90-121.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid*, 17.

<sup>224</sup> See *Ibid*, 129-162.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid*, 164.

synodal apostolic exhortation: the *List of 58 Propositions*<sup>226</sup> and the *Message to the People of God*.<sup>227</sup>

### ***List of 58 Propositions***

The *List of 58 Propositions* consists of an introduction and conclusion and four sections which address (1) the nature of the New Evangelization, (2) the contexts of the Church's ministry today, (3) pastoral responses to the circumstances of today, and (4) the agents and participants of the New Evangelization.

The first section, *The Nature of the New Evangelization*, enumerates nine general principles about mission and evangelization. Propositions four, five, and six affirm that the origin of the Church and her mission is the most Holy Trinity<sup>228</sup> and that, in the primacy of grace,<sup>229</sup> the inculturation of the faith<sup>230</sup> and proclamation of the Gospel<sup>231</sup> are a response to the command of God to “preach the Gospel to every creature.” (Mt 16:15)<sup>232</sup> Propositions seven through ten focus on evangelization as a permanent aspect of the Church to witness to the secular

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<sup>226</sup> See Synod of Bishops, “*List of Final Propositions: Synod of Bishops XIII Ordinary General Assembly*”, The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith, Vatican Website, October 7-28, 2012, [http://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino\\_25\\_xiii-ordinaria-2012/02\\_inglese/b33\\_02.html](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino_25_xiii-ordinaria-2012/02_inglese/b33_02.html), summary (accessed May 8, 2014). The Propositions, which contains 58 different propositions, is the “result of a determined moment in the synodal process and may serve in a possible promulgation of a papal document.”

<sup>227</sup> Synod of Bishops, “*Message to the People of God: Synod of Bishops XIII Ordinary General Assembly*”, The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith, Vatican Web Site, October 7-28, 2012, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_20121026\\_message-synod\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20121026_message-synod_en.html) (accessed May 17, 2014).

<sup>228</sup> *List of Propositions, Synod for the New Evangelization* 4.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

world the *kerygma*, so as to fulfill the right of each person to hear the Gospel.<sup>233</sup> Propositions eleven and twelve accentuate the importance of a prayerful reading of Sacred Scripture and the correct hermeneutical approach to interpreting the documents of the Second Vatican Council.<sup>234</sup> The second section of the *List of 58 Propositions* deals with the context of the Church's ministry today with thirteen propositions. Today's context presents challenges that require an effort at reconciliation.<sup>235</sup> Important areas for the New Evangelization to address include human rights, religious liberty, and social communication.<sup>236</sup> The Preambles of faith, such as anthropology, natural law, and human nature are important contexts of the New Evangelization.<sup>237</sup> The Church's magisterium on social teaching<sup>238</sup> and human development<sup>239</sup> should inform catechesis and preaching, especially in urban settings<sup>240</sup> and among the poor.<sup>241</sup> Beauty,<sup>242</sup> holiness,<sup>243</sup> and

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid, 7-10.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid, 11-12.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid, 13-14.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid, 15-16, 18.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid, 17. This proposition states that "In the contemporary context of a global Culture, many doubts and obstacles cause an extended skepticism and introduce new paradigms of thought and life. It is of paramount importance, for a New Evangelization, to underline the role of the *Preambles of Faith*. It is necessary not only to show that faith does not oppose reason, but also to highlight a number of truths and realities which pertain to a correct anthropology, that is enlightened by natural reason. Among them, is the value of the Natural Law, and the consequences it has for the whole human society. The notions of "Natural Law" and "human nature" are capable of rational demonstrations, both at the academic and popular levels."

<sup>238</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid, 23.

conversion<sup>244</sup> frame the overall goal of evangelization in the various contexts outlined. The third section of the *List of Propositions, Pastoral Responses to the Circumstances of Our Day*, enumerates the sectors of evangelization and outlines proper responses to each sector. Propositions twenty-six through thirty-two deal with the parish, education, catechesis, theology, and evangelization to the poor and sick.<sup>245</sup> The recovery of a stronger focus on Sunday, liturgy, and sacraments is indispensable to the spiritual dimension of the New Evangelization.<sup>246</sup> Christian initiation and popular piety, together, are essential aspects.<sup>247</sup> The fortieth proposition recognizes the Pontifical Council of the New Evangelization and suggests local churches establish local commissions to promote and study the subject.<sup>248</sup> The last section of the *List of Propositions* addresses issues pertaining to the agents and participants of the New Evangelization such as the role of the particular church, integration of pastoral activity, recognition and use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the normalcy of the parish, and the mission proper to the lay faithful.<sup>249</sup> In the New Evangelization, men and women are to collaborate, recognizing their equal dignity. Formation of evangelizers, outreach to all families, the role of consecrated persons, and ministering to youth must be prioritized.<sup>250</sup> Bishops and priests will be effective to the extent they “know the lives of the people they serve in a more personal way.”<sup>251</sup> The present

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid, 26-32.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid, 33-37.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid, 38-39.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid, 40.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid, 41-45.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid, 46-48, 51.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid, 49.



situation helps the Church to see that initial proclamation and ecumenical, interreligious, and scientific dialogue are interrelated, and in the context of a new “Courtyard of the Gentiles,”<sup>252</sup> presents a new opportunity for evangelization.<sup>253</sup> The conclusion of the *List of 58 Propositions*, in continuity with *Redemptoris Missio*, notes the primacy of witness and dependence upon the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Star of the New Evangelization, as a sign of hope and encouragement.<sup>254</sup>

### *Message to the People of God*

In addition to the *List of 58 Propositions*, which address the subject from a more technical point of view and whose audience is the Synod participants and the Holy Father, the Synod presents *The Message to the People of God*. The *Message* is a précis of the Synod for the whole world, summarizes key points about the New Evangelization, and presents them to the universal Church with the intention “to sustain and direct the preaching and teaching of the Gospel in the diverse contexts in which the Church finds herself today to give witness.”<sup>255</sup> The themes present in the *Message* are those found in the *Lineamenta*, *Instrumentum Laboris*, and *List of Propositions*, including: the primacy of an encounter with Christ in the Church; the need for newness of ardor, expression, and method today; strategies of evangelization; the role of

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<sup>252</sup> The Courtyard of the Gentiles makes reference to the courtyard of the second temple built after the exile which was open to all people, Jew and non-Jew alike. Today, the Courtyard of the Gentiles is a particular department of the Pontifical Council for Culture which encourages discussion and learning among people of all religions. See <http://www.cultura.va/content/cultura/en/dipartimenti/ateismo-e-non-credenza.html> (accessed August 7, 2014).

<sup>253</sup> Ibid, 52-55. Proposition 55 emphasizes the opportunity inherent in a dialogue between believers and non-believers on fundamental themes: “This dialogue is directed in particular to “those to whom religion is something foreign, to whom God is unknown and who nevertheless do not want to be left merely Godless, but rather to draw near to him, albeit as the Unknown” (Benedict XVI, *Address to the Members of the Roman Curia*, 21 December 2009). In a particular way, Catholic educational institutions could promote such a dialogue which is never separated from the “initial proclamation.”

<sup>254</sup> Ibid, 57-58.

<sup>255</sup> *Message to the People of God, Synod for the New Evangelization* preface.

personal conversion; and the various contexts and agents of the New Evangelization. So as not to simply repeat these themes, one specific aspect of the New Evangelization presented by the *Message* will be discussed below: the dynamic of evangelization.

The *Message* uses the gospel passage of the Samaritan woman at the well in Sychar (John 4:5-42) as a foundation to introduce the dynamic of how evangelization takes place. The woman, with many questions and unfulfilled desires in her heart, encounters Jesus at the well and through the encounter with him becomes a mediator through whom others encounter the Lord. By going to the town to announce the presence of Jesus, the woman acts as an evangelizer for the people; having received the message herself, she shares the message with others. The people then, having heard the message, go themselves to encounter the Lord. In the end, they announce: “We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world” (John 4:42). This passage points out that good evangelization recognizes in each person, like the Samaritan woman, the “hope of finding the fulfillment of the heart’s most profound desire; that which alone can give full meaning to life.”<sup>256</sup> It also notes that the fulfillment of that desire is found in an encounter with Jesus Christ mediated through others by an announcement of him and a subsequent personal experience of him. Therefore, the Church needs to “sit beside today’s men and women”<sup>257</sup> and “render the Lord present in their lives so that they can encounter him,”<sup>258</sup> just like how Jesus sat by the woman at the well and allowed her to encounter him. Additionally, those who do encounter him are called to recognize their own need for deeper conversion and become themselves the instrument

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<sup>256</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

through whom many others will experience the same encounter.<sup>259</sup> It must also be recognized that in the dynamic of evangelization, the Church must renew her trust in God, who is first initiator of all evangelizing activity. In this sense, “it is not we who conduct the work of evangelization, but God,”<sup>260</sup> as Pope Benedict XVI points out: “The first word, the true initiative, the true activity comes from God, and only by inserting ourselves into the divine initiative, only by begging this divine initiative, will we too be able to become with him and in him evangelizers.”<sup>261</sup>

The *Message* points out two expressions of the life of faith which can serve as symbols of authenticity, showing that the dynamic of evangelization is taking place effectively.<sup>262</sup> The first symbol of an authentic expression of faith in an evangelizing community is contemplation. Contemplation is a testimony to the reality that an encounter with Christ has taken shape in a person’s life and that the “adoring gaze at the mystery of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, has prevented the word of salvation from being lost in the many noises that overrun the world.”<sup>263</sup> Contemplation means that the encounter with Christ through prayer and through others has become an ongoing experience in one’s daily life. The second symbol of authenticity is the face of the poor in a community. The spiritual act of love and service to the poor allows the Christian to encounter Christ in a unique and tangible way, and is an expression of the life of faith of a

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<sup>259</sup> Ibid, 5. “We firmly believe that we must convert ourselves first to the power of Christ who alone can make all things new.”

<sup>260</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>261</sup> Benedict XVI, “Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Roman Curia Offering them his Christmas Greetings”, Vatican Website, December 22, 2005, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2005/december/documents/hf\\_ben\\_xvi\\_spe\\_20051222\\_roman-curia\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/december/documents/hf_ben_xvi_spe_20051222_roman-curia_en.html) (accessed April 14, 2014).-quoted by the Message in section six.

<sup>262</sup> *Message to the People of God, Synod for the New Evangelization* 12.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

community. The presence of the poor shows the presence of Christ in a mysterious and profound way: “Placing ourselves side by side with those who are wounded by life is not only social exercise, but above all a spiritual act because it is Christ’s face that shines in the face of the poor.”<sup>264</sup> The effectiveness and fruitfulness of the New Evangelization in a particular community can be seen in the two symbols of authenticity of contemplation and service to the poor.

### Summary

This chapter has continued to delve into the theme of the New Evangelization, and presented insights into it from Benedict XVI and documents of the Synod of the New Evangelization. Through looking at five moments in the pontificate of Benedict XVI, it has been shown that the New Evangelization is based on a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, requires a hermeneutic of reform, necessitates a correct understanding of mission, respect for conscience and religious freedom, and is a new Pentecost in which, through the simplicity of faith, will remain a permanent aspect of the life of the Church. In the *Synod* documents, it has been shown that the essence of the New Evangelization is a sharing of the personal encounter with Christ that each Christian experiences. The work of the New Evangelization is for agents and participants to share the encounter, aware of the current signs of the times, with all people, especially among those in geographical areas traditionally Catholic.

*The Message to the People of God* and *List of Propositions* outline specific principles and methods for doing the New Evangelization. The 49<sup>th</sup> proposition in the *List of Propositions*, which addresses the pastoral dimension of the ordained ministry, challenges priests of the New

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<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

Evangelization to prepare well for the work of the New Evangelization by developing an appropriate spirituality of encounter.<sup>265</sup> The starting point of the deep spirituality to which each priest is called is an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. Through the encounter with Jesus Christ, the priest develops a personal friendship with the Lord that naturally overflows into a desire to share him with others. Evangelized, the priest naturally becomes an evangelizer. Saint Peter the Apostle is an excellent example to priests of a man who encountered Christ, and through the encounter and subsequent friendship with him, became himself an “evangelizer force” for others. The next and final chapter of this thesis surveys the life of Saint Peter and presents him and his encounter with Christ as an example to priests of the New Evangelization. Lessons from these encounters in the life of Saint Peter are presented as a means for developing a deepened apostolic spirituality.

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<sup>265</sup> *List of Propositions, Synod for the New Evangelization* 49: “So that priests will be adequately prepared for the work of the New Evangelization, the Synod wishes that in their formation, care is taken to form them in a deep spirituality, solid doctrine, the capacity to communicate in catechesis and an awareness of modern cultural phenomena.” See also Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Gospel of Joy), Vatican Web Site, November 24, 2013, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html#Personal\\_encounter\\_with\\_the\\_saving\\_love\\_of\\_Jesus](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html#Personal_encounter_with_the_saving_love_of_Jesus), 264 (accessed May 15, 2014). Pope Francis writes: “The primary reason for evangelizing is the love of Jesus which we have received, the experience of salvation which urges us to ever greater love of him. What kind of love would not feel the need to speak of the beloved, to point him out, to make him known? If we do not feel an intense desire to share this love, we need to pray insistently that he will once more touch our hearts. We need to implore his grace daily, asking him to open our cold hearts and shake up our lukewarm and superficial existence.”

### Chapter Three:

#### Chart of Themes and Lessons by Passage

Passage	Themes	Lesson	Lesson
Luke 5:1-11: Foundational Identity of Peter	Vocation, Obedience and Salvation	Inherent integration in the life of the priest	Use a method of encounter
Matthew 16:13-20: Deepening of the Call	Revelation and Knowledge	Importance of reflection and self- care	Understand the particularized call
Luke 22:31-34: A Unique Grace	Authority of Jesus over Evil and Love and Patience of Jesus for Peter	Courage	Encourage your brothers and the Lord encourages you
Mark 14:26-31,66-72: Loved Sinner in Need of Redemption	Prophecy of Zechariah, the weakness of Peter and the denial	How to approach the Cross	Failure can lead to success
John 21:1-19: Peter in the Light of the Resurrection	Revelation, Call, Mission, and Identity. Peter: Fisher of Persons, Shepherd of the Flock and Martyr for the Lord	Admit and reflect upon need, for Jesus will provide.	Personal relationship with Christ as the source of mission

### **Chapter Three**

#### **Peter the Apostle, Disciple and Evangelizer: Revealed Through Encounters with Christ**

“Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed that your own faith may not fail; and once you have turned back, you must strengthen your brothers.” (Luke 22:31-32)

A basic principle of evangelization is that to be an evangelizer, one must first be evangelized. Friendship with God is the basis of evangelization because to be evangelized means to know and accept the love of God expressed in a friendship with God through the person of Jesus Christ. Every Christian is invited to friendship with God through an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. Peter is an excellent example of a person who, through his encounters with Jesus, became a friend of Christ and, subsequently, became an evangelizing force himself. Having first been the subject of evangelization, he then became an evangelizing presence.

This chapter analyzes five Scripture passages that illustrate Peter’s encounter with Jesus and the development of friendship between them. The purpose of this chapter is to present lessons and themes present in each of the passages: Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 16:13-20; Luke 22:31-34; Mark 14:26-31, 66-72; and John 21:1-19. The analysis of the Gospel passages will highlight the theme of Peter as the subject of evangelization, as well as focus on what is revealed about Peter’s identity through his encounter with Christ. Lessons from each passage for priests of the New Evangelization will also be discussed.

## Luke 5:1-11: Foundational Identity of Peter

### Analysis and Themes

Luke 5:1-11 tells the story of the call of the first disciples at the Lake of Gennesaret at the beginning of the ministry of Jesus. The passage teaches about the foundational and vocational identity of Peter as a “fisher of persons” (Luke 5:10). Jesus walks along the lake and sees Peter and others washing their nets after a discouraging and unproductive night of fishing. Jesus enters into their world and, through his preaching and a miraculous catch of fish, inspires Peter to enter into a deeper relationship with him.<sup>266</sup> God’s incarnational way of action is seen in this encounter. Jesus goes into Peter’s world, his life, his activity, and his work in order to reveal himself to Peter and to establish a more intentional and intimate relationship with him. The intimate encounter reveals Peter’s vocational identity as sharing in the mission of Jesus as a “fisher of persons” (5:10). The themes *vocation*, *obedience*, and *salvation* are present in this passage and frame it. Taken together, they reveal the overall message of the passage: One’s vocational identity is a response to grace through obedience to God’s Word, and leads to a participation in the salvation brought by Jesus.

The *vocational* themes that are present in this passage and characteristic of the call of Peter are illustrative of the call that many people experience. Jesus calls Peter in the midst of his daily life in a way that is familiar to him.<sup>267</sup> The call is easily grasped,<sup>268</sup> but only when received

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<sup>266</sup> Peter had presumably already met Jesus when He cured Peter’s mother-in-law in Peter’s home, perhaps even the day previous to Peter’s call at the Lake of Genessaret. See Luke 4:38-39.

<sup>267</sup> Daniel J. Harrington, Richard J. Clifford, Gale A. Yee, Lawrence M. Wills, *The New Interpreter's Bible: General Articles & Introduction, Commentary, & Reflections for each Book of the Bible, Including the Apocryphal / Deuterocanonical Books, in Twelve Volumes*, “Luke”, Vol. 9 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 117.

<sup>268</sup> John L. McKenzie and Alois Stöger, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 94.



with openness and obedience.<sup>269</sup> It is unmerited<sup>270</sup> and by God's design.<sup>271</sup> The encounter with Christ evokes fear, awe, and the realization of unworthiness.<sup>272</sup> It requires a departure from old ways and promises a new identity and purpose, as evidenced from Jesus' words to Peter: "from now on you will be catching men" (Luke 5:10). Jesus here invites Peter not only to a change of profession, but to a fundamental change of life because of a fundamentally new relationship toward Jesus.

The theme of *obedience*, specifically in response to the Word of God, is present in this passage as an essential element of the call. Because Jesus *is* the Word of God himself, he is to be obeyed.<sup>273</sup> The people press to listen to the word of God spoken by Jesus (Luke 5:1). He sits and speaks the word with authority (5:3).<sup>274</sup> It is at his word that Peter will set out into the deep (5:5). Peter obeys the word of Jesus much like Mary obeys the word of the angel (1:38). The way Peter addresses Jesus as *Master* or *Lord* indicates both belief<sup>275</sup> and obedience.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> Daniel J. Harrington and others, *The New Interpreter's Bible : General Articles & Introduction, Commentary, & Reflections for each Book of the Bible, Including the Apocryphal / Deuterocanonical Books, in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 9 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 117.

<sup>271</sup> Frederick W. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age, According to St. Luke; a Commentary on the Third Gospel* (St. Louis, Mo.: Clayton Pub. House, 1972), 116.

<sup>272</sup> I. H. Marshall and W. W. Gasque, *The Gospel of Luke : A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 204.

<sup>273</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke : Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, Vol. 1 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981), 565. Note also that it is in John's Gospel (1:1-18) that identification of Jesus with God's Word is made explicit.

<sup>274</sup> The posture of sitting and teaching is indicative of the authority with which the Rabbi teaches. See also, Luke 4:18.

<sup>275</sup> E. E. Ellis and E. E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (London: Oliphants, 1974), 102.

<sup>276</sup> Marchal and Gasque, *The Gospel of Luke*, 203.

The notion of *salvation* present in this passage is an overarching theme in Luke-Acts.<sup>277</sup> This passage shows that the essence of vocation is to share in the very action of salvation. It is to share in the life and mission of Jesus, who brings salvation.<sup>278</sup> Before Peter is able to share in the mission, he needs first to recognize the purpose of the mission, even in its latent form. Peter's realization of Jesus as Lord (the one who will bring salvation) opens the door to Jesus' assurance that Peter will participate in his mission. Peter's participation in Jesus' mission incorporates a new way of fishing: catching persons alive with the word of God.<sup>279</sup> In fact, the very act of fishing with the net was likened by some Church Fathers to the preaching of the word done by those called to that specific vocation.<sup>280</sup>

This passage thereby teaches that obedience to God's word is a response to the grace of encounter with Jesus and a prerequisite for entering more intentionally and deeply into the salvation given through the encounter with him. Obedience to the Word of God is integral to Peter realizing the invitation to friendship and vocation with Jesus. It is, therefore, integral to his being an instrument of salvation, a fisher of persons. By entering into Peter's boat, Jesus enters

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<sup>277</sup> Richard J. Cassidy, *Four Times Peter: Portrayals of Peter in the Four Gospels and at Philippi* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2007), 37-38.

<sup>278</sup> Luke 4:16-21 makes clear this notion that Jesus came to bring salvation: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free." (Luke 4:18)

<sup>279</sup> Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Luke* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1984), 106.

Schweizer notes that the participation of Peter and the disciples in the mission of Jesus is not just the proclamation of something, but the proclamation of someone: Jesus. The proclamation includes a relationship with the one who saves: "Therefore they will not merely proclaim salvation, like Jesus; they will proclaim him and what they have encountered through him as salvation."

<sup>280</sup> Arthur A. Just and Thomas C. Oden, *Luke* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity, 2003), 87-88.

Just and Oden note how Cyril of Alexandria likened the net to preaching, noting that the net is continuously cast out from Peter's boat, the Church, and is still in need of helpers to draw it in. Augustine similarly likened the net to the Word of God cast into the sea of the world that catches people alive.

into his life in a unique way and teaches him about his calling. Peter, as a response to the encounter with Jesus, an encounter with salvation, is obedient to Jesus and learns his calling.

But there is more. Peter's obedience to Jesus' "unreasonable" command and his acknowledgment of Jesus' words lead to a big catch of fish; that is, Jesus works through Peter's obedience. Peter's further confession of Jesus as Lord and his awe-filled and fearful acknowledgement of his own sinfulness before Jesus are an acknowledgement of the grace of the encounter with the Lord, which leads subsequently to his call to Peter. This call, this vocation to follow Jesus and to be a fisher of persons, is an invitation to enter into a relationship of friendship with the Lord and to thus share in His mission. Through his relationship with Jesus, Peter is given the mission to do for others what Christ does for him. Just as Jesus acts as a fisherman and catches Peter, so Peter now leaves his profession of fishing and becomes a "fisher of persons" (Luke 5:10) after the example of Jesus. The encounter with Jesus changed Peter. It gave him a vocational identity, a share in the identity and mission of Jesus. From a vocational perspective, he is invited to be an instrument of salvation for others as a sharer in Jesus' mission of catching persons. Peter, therefore, is a loved sinner called by Jesus to share in his mission.

### **Lessons for Priests of the New Evangelization**

Luke 5:1-11 provides several lessons for priests of the New Evangelization, two of which are presented here. The first lesson is that there is an *inherent integration* in every vocation that brings together call, identity, and mission. This dynamic is seen in Peter's call: he is called by Jesus and, after acknowledging his identity as a sinner, is told his true identity as one called to follow Jesus, and receives his mission as a "fisher of men" (Luke 5:8). The dynamic is also true for any priest: through an acknowledgement of his own "littleness" in front of the immensity of

the Lord, he realizes his true identity as a man loved and called by Jesus to follow him, and receives his mission as sharing in the Lord's saving activity as a "fisher of persons." The priest of the New Evangelization is well served to remember the integrated nature of his call, especially in an environment that threatens to reduce priests to "sacrament machines" or to overwhelm them with an over-focus on activity and an under-focus on identity. Attention to models of effective mission-minded pastoral care shows that people are moved to conversion by evangelizing priests who exude an awareness of their own identity, mission, and call—not by programs. Remembering the integral relationship between call, mission, and identity also challenges the priest of the New Evangelization to go back to the origin of his call, to the personal encounter with Jesus, to constantly rediscover the core of his vocational identity.<sup>281</sup>

The second lesson taught by the passage at hand is found in the method Jesus uses in reaching out to Peter. Jesus enters into Peter's own experience and from within that experience calls Peter to imagine the possibility of a different experience of life. The priest of the New Evangelization does well to imitate this method, in which God enters into the life of a person in order to capture his or her attention. The missionary thrust of the Church outlined by the Second Vatican Council, Benedict XVI, the Synod for the New Evangelization, and Pope Francis has emphasized a need to recapture this incarnational dimension of the response of the Church to "Go into the whole world..." (Mark 16:15). To simply open the doors and invite people in is not

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<sup>281</sup> See Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (Gospel of Joy), 264-267, where Francis exhorts all evangelizers to constantly reflect upon their own personal encounter with the saving love of Jesus. The priest of the New Evangelization grows in vocational awareness in this way.

a mission-minded approach. The New Evangelization demands, especially of priests, an attitude of “encounter” where we go out, ready to enter into the lives of the people we meet.<sup>282</sup>

In Luke 5:1-11 Peter thus finds his foundational vocational identity as a loved sinner called by Christ to follow him in his saving mission. Let’s turn now to Matthew 16:13-20, where Jesus reveals to Peter an even more particularized call, indicating a deepening of his vocation and relationship with Jesus.

### **Matthew 16:13-20: Deepening of the Call**

#### **Analysis and Themes**

Jesus takes the disciples north of Galilee to the southern slope of Mount Hermon<sup>283</sup> to the city of Caesarea Philippi, and it is here that he asks them two questions: “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” (Matt 16:13), and “But who do you say that I am?” (16:15). In response to the first question, the disciples report what some or other of the people believe. In response to the second question, Peter responds: “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (16:16). Then, in response to Peter’s divinely inspired answer, Jesus declares Peter “blessed” and reveals the apostle’s particular role in the establishment of the Church.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> See Francis, “*Chrism Mass Homily: St. Peter’s Basilica, Holy Thursday*”, Vatican Web Site, March 28, 2013, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130328\\_messa-crismale.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130328_messa-crismale.html) (accessed May 17, 2014). The Holy Father notes the importance for priests to go out to all people with the anointing received at ordination: “We need to ‘go out’, then, in order to experience our own anointing, its power and its redemptive efficacy: to the ‘outskirts’ where there is suffering, bloodshed, blindness that longs for sight, and prisoners in thrall to many evil masters.”

<sup>283</sup> Daniel J. Harrington and Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, Vol. 3 (Collegeville, Minn.; Collegeville, Minnesota; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 247.

<sup>284</sup> Edward P. Sri and Curtis Mitch, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2010), 207. See also Raymond Edward Brown, Karl P. Donfried, and John Henry Paul Reumann, eds., *Peter in the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1973). Throughout the whole work, the authors provide a thorough exposition of the many debated topics regarding the establishment and nature of the Church and Peter’s role as *Petros*.

Two themes in this passage are helpful to understanding the development of Peter's identity. The first theme is *revelation* and the importance of openness to it. Caesarea Philippi is a place of divine revelation,<sup>285</sup> and it is here that Peter receives the knowledge of Jesus' identity as the "Messiah, Son of the living God" (16:16) as a free gift from the Father.<sup>286</sup> Peter's confession is an indication that he is blessed: "Blessed are you Simon, Son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my heavenly Father" (16:17). While the revelation Peter receives is a pure gift,<sup>287</sup> it nonetheless comes after Peter has had sufficient time to get to know Jesus more intimately during his public ministry. In fact, this passage is at a key point in the structure of Matthew.<sup>288</sup> Jesus has completed his public ministry and now focuses on his way to Jerusalem and the Cross. By this time, Peter has heard Jesus preach the Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:28), seen him heal the sick (including his own mother-in-law) (ch. 8, 9, 12), watched him calm the sea (8:23-27), been sent on mission (10:5-15), learned about the conditions of discipleship (10:37-42), experienced the opposition of the Pharisees (12:1-50), heard Jesus' teaching in parables (13:1-53), walked to him on the water (14:22-33), and witnessed the multiplication of the loaves (14:13-21; 15:32-39). Now, after many months of deepening his knowledge and experience of Jesus, Peter is in Caesarea Philippi and, through the question posed by Jesus, reflects on the identity of the Lord. The revelation Peter receives is a gift, but also the result of his experience of Jesus and personal reflection on it.

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<sup>285</sup> Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2007), 249-250.

<sup>286</sup> Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy, Heart of the Word : Meditations on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, Vol. 2 (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 514-516.

<sup>287</sup> Raymond Edward ed Brown and others, *Peter in the New Testament* (Minneapolis : New York; Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House ; Paulist Press; Augsburg Pub. House; Augsburg Publishing House, 1973), 87.

<sup>288</sup> Cassidy, *Four Times Peter : Portrayals of Peter in the Four Gospels and at Philippi*, 61.

The second theme for consideration is that of *knowledge*. Two points are important here. The first is the distinction between external and internal knowledge of Jesus.<sup>289</sup> The “people” (16:13) have an external knowledge of him: they know something true about his identity, but not the whole picture: they regard him as a prophet, much like other prophets (16:14). But Peter, after day-to-day experience of Jesus, and in his openness to divine revelation, has an internal knowledge of Jesus: he knows Jesus to be the Messiah. The internal knowledge of Jesus that Peter expresses does not come through superficiality, but through authentic discipleship: through being with him.<sup>290</sup> In Mark’s account of the missioning of the Twelve “to preach and to have authority to drive out demons,” Jesus first appoints the Twelve “that they might *be with him*” (Mark 3:14). At Caesarea Philippi Peter has appropriated the foundational call to be with Jesus as outlined by Mark, and has opened himself up to the specific divine revelation God gives him regarding his particularized role.

The second point with regard to knowledge is the correlation between knowledge of Jesus and knowledge of self. The revelation received by Peter allows him to know the identity of Jesus; it also allows him to know his own identity in a deeper way. Jesus’ response to Peter—“And I say to you, you are Peter...” (Matt 16:17)—shows a progression of revelation toward Peter’s self knowledge: the Father reveals Jesus’ identity to Peter, and Jesus reveals Peter’s identity to the apostle himself. Peter’s call is to be *Petros* (“Rock”)<sup>291</sup> upon which the Church is

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<sup>289</sup> Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth. Part Two, Holy Week from the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection* (San Francisco, Calif.: Ignatius Press, 2011), 291-292.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid. Benedict writes: “On one hand, there is an external knowledge of Jesus that, while not necessarily false, is inadequate. On the other hand, there is a deeper knowledge that is linked to discipleship, to participation in Jesus’ way, and such knowledge can grow only in that context.” Here too is a lesson for priests of the New Evangelization who want to know Jesus more deeply but who fail to walk in his way.

<sup>291</sup> Sri and Mitch, *Gospel of Matthew*, 207. Sri and Mitch write: “Before the rise of Christianity, the Greek word rendered ‘Peter’ (petros) was simply a common noun meaning ‘rock’.” In the New Testament, Peter is referred to

built, as well as to be the keeper of the keys to the kingdom of heaven. This call is a particularized vocation within the broader call of discipleship previously outlined. The direct correlation between knowledge of Jesus and knowledge of self also extends to Peter's growth in self-understanding and expression of his truest self. As Peter is open to revelation, reflecting upon his personal experience of Jesus, he grows in self-knowledge. But when Peter fails to do so, he falls short of his truest identity. This dynamic is seen in the verses following the passage at hand, where Peter rebukes Jesus for speaking about his mission to "go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly" (16:21). Jesus makes his own rebuke and tells Peter he is no longer acting as the rock he truly is, but rather as a stumbling block.<sup>292</sup> It is because Peter is "thinking not as God does, but as human beings do" (16:23) that he falls short of knowing Jesus in his identity as the Suffering Servant. Peter will not see his truest self until the grace of the resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

### **Lessons for Priests of the New Evangelization**

This passage has several lessons for priests of the New Evangelization. Two lessons are discussed here. The first lesson is the importance for priests, in their ongoing formation and self-care, of a prayer life that incorporates regular reflection and meditation on one's own personal experience of the encounter with Jesus Christ, an encounter that takes place in ministry and in the quiet of prayer. Priests can find it difficult to take the time to pray outside of what is already incorporated into their pastoral responsibilities and promises vis-à-vis the Liturgy of the Hours and Holy Mass. But through meditating on the question "Who do you say that I am?" (Matt

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as "Cephas", a Greek form of the Aramaic word *kepha'*, which means a massive rock. Here, in Matthew 16, *petros* means the same, a massive rock. It is striking that Jesus chooses Caesarea Philippi, a place of pagan worship at the site of a massive rock formation to rename Peter and establish the place of true worship, the Church.

<sup>292</sup> Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 252.



16:15), the priest of the New Evangelization comes to see more and more his own identity in relation to the identity of Jesus. This type of reflection goes beyond continuing study and theological reflection, for the second question posed by Jesus was not first and foremost an inquiry into the disciples' understanding or acceptance of Jesus' teachings; rather, it was an inquiry about their understanding of his very person in relation to them. He did not ask, for example, "What do you think of the Beatitudes, or my teaching on adultery?" In essence, he asked them: "What do you think about *me*?"<sup>293</sup> The type of meditation and reflection needed for the priest of the New Evangelization is one which leads to a deeper realization of "being with Jesus" (Mark 3:14) and which recognizes that discipleship and one's deepening of the share in the Lord's priestly vocation are never fully exhausted. The annual retreat, required by Canon Law,<sup>294</sup> is an opportunity for each priest to go, as it were, to Caesarea Philippi and hear Jesus ask anew the question, "Who do you say that I am?" (Matt 16:15).<sup>295</sup>

The second lesson for priests of the New Evangelization has to do with the way priests see themselves in relation to their own particularized role within a priestly vocation. The Lord's more particularized call to Peter to become the *Petros* is not the result of Peter's merit, but naturally flows from Peter's friendship with Jesus. For the priest of the New Evangelization, a more particularized call to increased responsibility in the pastoral care of souls is not the result of

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<sup>293</sup> *Catholicism: Created and Hosted by Rev. Robert E. Barron*, Episode One, DVD, Directed by Matt Leonard (Skokie, Illinois, Word on Fire), 2011.

<sup>294</sup> *Codex Iuris Canonici (CIC) auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgates* (Vatican City: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1983), Canon 276.2.

<sup>295</sup> See *Evangelii Gaudium*, 77 where Pope Francis notes the need for all pastoral workers and evangelizers to enjoy a place where they can reflect upon their experience of Christ. Francis writes: "I am aware that we need to create spaces where pastoral workers can be helped and healed, 'places where faith itself in the crucified and risen Jesus is renewed, where the most profound questions and daily concerns are shared, where deeper discernment about our experiences and life itself is undertaken in the light of the Gospel, for the purpose of directing individual and social decisions towards the good and beautiful'".

any merit on his part, but should flow from his deepening friendship with the Lord. From this perspective, becoming a pastor is not a promotion or a reward for a job well done (nor is it a punishment for being a good administrator!); it should be the fruit of a more intimate friendship with Jesus. Practical considerations notwithstanding, priests today do well to accept the added pastoral care necessitated by the New Evangelization as an invitation by Christ to a more intimate share in his life.<sup>296</sup>

Matthew 16:13-20 thus makes it clear that Jesus invited Peter into a unique relationship with him at Caesarea Philippi, especially in connection with the establishment of the Church and the pastoral care of her members. This unique role necessitates a unique grace. In Luke 22:31-34, Jesus reveals the unique grace given Peter to sustain him in living out the role given to him at Caesarea Philippi.

### **Luke 22:31-34: A Unique Grace Given**

#### **Analysis and Themes**

Luke 22 begins the passion narrative and encompasses the Last Supper, Jesus' agony in the garden, and the betrayal and arrest of Jesus. Within this context, following the Last Supper,

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<sup>296</sup> In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Francis describes the situation where priests fail to embrace pastoral work as a share in the life of Christ but instead, because of selfishness, fail to see the joy in a more particularized role in the Church. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, 78 he writes: "Today we are seeing in many pastoral workers, including consecrated men and women, an inordinate concern for their personal freedom and relaxation, which leads them to see their work as a mere appendage to their life, as if it were not part of their very identity. At the same time, the spiritual life comes to be identified with a few religious exercises which can offer a certain comfort but which do not encourage encounter with others, engagement with the world or a passion for evangelization. As a result, one can observe in many agents of evangelization, even though they pray, a heightened individualism, a crisis of identity and a cooling of fervour. These are three evils which fuel one another." In *Evangelii Gaudium* Francis writes: "something similar is also happening with priests who are obsessed with protecting their free time. This is frequently due to the fact that people feel an overbearing need to guard their personal freedom, as though the task of evangelization was a dangerous poison rather than a joyful response to God's love which summons us to mission and makes us fulfilled and productive. Some resist giving themselves over completely to mission and thus end up in a state of paralysis and acedia."

Jesus predicts that Peter will deny him. But prior to the prediction, Jesus makes a bold statement in which he assures Peter of his personal prayers for him in the midst of the latter's impending failure: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed that your own faith may not fail; and once you have turned back, you must strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:31). This small pericope contains a large lesson, which will come into fuller focus in John 21 in the light of the resurrection: although Peter will deny Jesus, Jesus does not revoke the apostle's role as *Petros* given him at Caesarea Philippi. In the Lukan passage, Jesus offers efficacious prayers for Peter that he will be able, despite his failure to confess Jesus, to eventually fulfill the role given to him as pastor or shepherd.

Two themes emerge from this pericope. The first theme is the *authority of Jesus over evil*. Satan must ask permission to sift the disciples like wheat,<sup>297</sup> but Jesus retains authority over Peter's faith. Here, as in the Book of Job, God allows his follower to be tested by Satan, but retains authority over the extent and intensity of the testing.<sup>298</sup> The second theme is the *love of Jesus* for Peter and the other disciples. Jesus anticipates Peter's denial of him, not with condemnation or rebuke, but with *assurance of his ongoing love* for Peter, despite the latter's failure. This shows that Jesus' love for Peter and the disciples is not dependent upon their success in exercising discipleship; rather, love is the essence of who Jesus is and why he came. As the First Letter of John points out: "In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son for expiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). The Lukan passage also teaches about the *patience* of Jesus' love. Jesus is willing to wait for Peter to grow into the

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<sup>297</sup> This image is startling: Satan will shake Peter's world like flour is shaken in a sieve. The result is a separation of the wheat from the rubbish. Although Peter suffers the shock of being shaken and the violence of recognizing his own sinfulness, he is purified. See John Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53* (Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1993), 1072-1073.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*

disciple he has called him to be and encourages him on the way. It is striking that Jesus does not pray for Peter not to deny him, but for his faith not to fail in the process.<sup>299</sup>

### **Lesson for Priests of the New Evangelization**

This passage holds a very important lesson for priests of the New Evangelization to be men of mutual encouragement. Jesus encourages Peter toward a more authentic expression of his discipleship and of his particularized role as *Petros*. Although Peter will fail in the process, Jesus does not fail to encourage him to do what is right after he has “turned back” (Luke 22:31) in repentance. Strengthened by Jesus’ prayer, Peter is expected, in turn, to strengthen his brothers, his fellow disciples. So, too, the priest of the New Evangelization does well to follow Peter’s example by strengthening his brother priests in discipleship and priestly identity. The mutual care of priests for each other recognizes the brotherhood inherent in the ordained priesthood, and demands an ongoing commitment to build one other up instead of tearing one other down.<sup>300</sup> When priests show themselves to be mutually encouraging, the broader community is encouraged to participate in the life of the church. The New Evangelization expects the local community to be an example of communion to non-practicing and alienated Catholics. When priests of the New Evangelization show true communion among themselves,

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<sup>299</sup> Harrington and Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 346. Johnson notes that the Greek word, *ekleipō*, translated “fail,” in fact means “run out.”

<sup>300</sup> As Francis points out in *Evangelii Gaudium*, 85, a sterile pessimism is often at work in the Church, even among a presbyterate: “One of the more serious temptations which stifles boldness and zeal is a defeatism which turns us into querulous and disillusioned pessimists, “sourpusses”. Nobody can go off to battle unless he is fully convinced of victory beforehand. If we start without confidence, we have already lost half the battle and we bury our talents. While painfully aware of our own frailties, we have to march on without giving in, keeping in mind what the Lord said to Saint Paul: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12:9).” On the contrary when priests are mutually encouraging toward one another, modeling the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation required by the New Evangelization, a spirit of hopeful enthusiasm prevails, as Francis notes in *Evangelii Gaudium* 100: “Those wounded by historical divisions find it difficult to accept our invitation to forgiveness and reconciliation, since they think that we are ignoring their pain or are asking them to give up their memory and ideals. But if they see the witness of authentically fraternal and reconciled communities, they will find that witness luminous and attractive.”

encouraging each other in mutual care, they also attract and draw others into that same communion.<sup>301</sup>

## **Mark 14:26-31, 66-72: Loved Sinner in Need of Redemption**

### **Analysis and Themes**

Peter's three-fold denial of Jesus, found in Mark 14:26-31, 66-72, provides further insight into the former's identity as a loved sinner in need of redemption. It begins with Jesus' prediction that all the disciples will fall away (Mark 14:27) from him, and finishes with Peter's denying him three times in the courtyard of the high priest. Three topics stand out: (1) the prophecy of Zechariah 13:7, (2) the negative portrayal of Peter, and (3) what it means to deny Jesus. Taken together, they reveal Peter's identity as a weak sinner in need of healing and redemption.

Jesus uses the prophecy of Zechariah—"I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered" (Zechariah 13:7)—to indicate that he will be stricken and his disciples will be scattered.<sup>302</sup> But he also assures the disciples that, after being raised up, he will go ahead of them to Galilee. The *scattering* and *being raised/going ahead* are another way that Jesus predicts both the crucifixion and his being raised from the dead, with the subsequent re-gathering of the disciples in Galilee. The prophecy therefore is not entirely negative but, in fact, has an overall

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<sup>301</sup> See *Message to the People of God, Synod for the New Evangelization* 3. "We must form welcoming communities in which all outcasts find a home, concrete experiences of communion which attract the disenchanted glance of contemporary humanity with the ardent force of love — *"See how they love one another!"* (Tertullian, *Apology*, 39, 7)."

<sup>302</sup> Daniel J. Harrington and John R. Donahue, *The Gospel of Mark* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2002), 402.

positive thrust.<sup>303</sup> It is redemptive in purpose and is part of God's mysterious plan. It shows that, although Jesus as the Suffering Servant must go to his cross, he will be raised and gather his disciples to himself. Jesus' use of the prophecy, in this particular context, also shows the intense nature of Jesus' relationship with his disciples. His intimate friendship with his disciples is all the more striking given that, immediately after his fellowship with them at the Last Supper, he acknowledges that they will not reciprocate the communion he has offered them at the meal. Nonetheless, Jesus will gather them together, just as the wheat and grapes are gathered together to make the bread and wine.

Peter is portrayed in Mark 14 in a negative way. He is overly self-confident and exudes an air of superiority towards the other disciples.<sup>304</sup> He has an attitude of bravado that ignores the second part of Jesus' prediction and focuses only on the first: that Jesus must be struck down.<sup>305</sup> The apostle lacks understanding of himself and of Jesus and his mission.<sup>306</sup> He is also

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<sup>303</sup> This prophecy and fulfillment are at the same time a (1) declaration that all things, even suffering, are under the powerful plan of God (Harrington and Donahue, *Gospel of Mark*, 402); and (2) "An assurance that forgiveness and restoration are available to all those who desert or deny Jesus under persecution" (Mary Healy, *The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008), 288. ; and (3) an encouragement to the doubtful (Mann, *Mark*, 630).

<sup>304</sup> Cassidy, *Four Times Peter : Portrayals of Peter in the Four Gospels and at Philippi*, 30.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid, 29. See also Benedict, who notes that: "It is a further development of the exchanges with Peter that occurred during the Last Supper. Peter does not hear the prophecy of the resurrection. He only registers the reference to death and dispersal." Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth. Part Two, Holy Week from the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection*, 151.

<sup>306</sup> Peter's lack of self-understanding is primarily seen in his overestimation of his ability to be with Jesus and to die for Jesus: "Even though all will have their faith shaken, mine will not be.... Even though I should have to die with you, I will not deny you. (Mark 14:30-31). His self-knowledge is lacking: his faith is weak but he does not know it; he does not see the promise of Jesus that he will be raised up. In addition, he clings to his own pre-conceived notion of Jesus, which he hopes does not include suffering and death.

headstrong: when Jesus tells him about his impending fault, he refuses to believe: his inordinate zeal [*“he vehemently”*<sup>307</sup> *replied*] (14:31)] overcomes his weak self-knowledge.

Peter’s denial of Jesus completes Mark’s negative portrayal of him. For Mark, to deny Jesus has several aspects, each of which is tantamount to rejecting discipleship. To deny Jesus is to refuse to deny oneself.<sup>308</sup> In Mark 8:34, as a corrective to Peter’s rebuke of his first passion prediction, Jesus teaches his disciples the necessity of denying oneself, carrying one’s cross, and following after him in order to accept him as Messiah. Peter, by denying Jesus, *de facto*, fails in discipleship. He fails to deny himself, to transcend himself and his own projects and concerns, and thus he fails to share in the Cross which Jesus is beginning to carry. To deny Jesus is also to say no to “being with” Him.<sup>309</sup> In Mark 14, each of the three accusations against Peter not only intimate a knowledge of Jesus but also the association of being with him. In the first accusation, the servant girl makes the accusation, “You too were with Jesus of Nazareth” (14:67). In the second and third, the accusation is of being “one of them” (14:69-70).

This passage contrasts the weakness of Peter and the strength of Jesus. “Weak” Peter is not ready to fully embrace the demand of discipleship, while “strong” Jesus embraces the rejection and condemnation that will bring him to the Cross. Mark masterfully conveys the contrast by describing the two “trials” as taking place at the same time: Jesus on trial before the

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<sup>307</sup> Ezra P. Gould, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1907), 268. Gould notes that “vehemently” here means “inordinately.”

<sup>308</sup> Williamson and Healy, *Gospel of Mark*, 288. After Peter’s confession and subsequent rebuke of Jesus for predicting his own passion, Jesus declared to Peter and to all the disciples that “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself...whoever is ashamed of me...the Son of Man will be ashamed of...” (Mark 8:38). See also Harrington and Donahue, *The Gospel of Mark*, 402. Jesus equates denial of him with failure to deny oneself and therefore with the opposite of discipleship.

<sup>309</sup> Agustí Borrell, *The Good News of Peter's Denial : A Narrative and Rhetorical Reading of Mark 14:54.66-72* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1998), 95.

Sanhedrin, and Peter on trial before the servants and guards.<sup>310</sup> Peter shares, in a certain way, in the trial of Jesus, but his denial constitutes a failure, and his failure only makes evident the contrast between him and the Lord.<sup>311</sup> No longer self-assured as he was on the Mount of Olives, Peter is weak, insecure, and concerned with his own comfort and welfare.<sup>312</sup> The three-fold character of Peter's denial, which follows upon his trying to follow Jesus at a distance (Mark 14:54), is incremental in intensity.<sup>313</sup> First, the apostle denies even understanding what the servant-girl means when she accuses him of being with Jesus. Then he outright denies being with Jesus. Finally, he denies even knowing "the man you are talking about" (14:71) with curses and oaths. The passage reveals the identity of Peter as a sinner in need of the redemption given by Jesus. In this sense, Peter has proven by his actions the self-assessment he expressed when he protested, "Depart from me Lord, for I am a *sinful man*" at the Sea of Galilee (Luke 5:8). It will be shown, however, that even after Peter denies him, Jesus still does not depart from him. Rather, as we will see below, Jesus invites him into a deeper relationship at the Sea of Tiberius (John 21: 1-19). The Markan passage also reveals the love of Jesus who, after being struck and His flock scattered, will nonetheless gather them back to Himself. In his love, he will gather even those who scatter, including Peter.

### **Lessons for Priests of the New Evangelization**

Mark 14 holds several lessons for priests of the New Evangelization, two of which are discussed here. The first lesson is simply that to follow Jesus to the Cross is difficult and often

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<sup>310</sup> Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 467.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid. Evans notes that "Peter's failing only makes Jesus look more impressive."

<sup>312</sup> Healy, *The Gospel of Mark*, 302.

<sup>313</sup> Borrell, *The Good News of Peter's Denial*, 54-65.



involves failure<sup>314</sup>, even in spite of one's good intention to follow Jesus closely. The way Peter fails and the way he responds are instructive. Peter fails primarily because of his unrealistic self-assessment and his underestimation of the difficulty of embracing the Cross. The priest of the New Evangelization does well to have a realistic understanding of his own limitations, especially in the midst of increasingly challenging pastoral situations. Having supportive networks of spiritual direction, fraternity, and regular Confession are essential for a priest today to keep a realistic estimation of himself and a hope-filled attitude toward embracing the Cross.<sup>315</sup> Those in charge of priestly assignments are reminded not to place a priest "in over his head" in pastoral situations, weighing him down by too much administration or testing him beyond his abilities, even when the priest may agree to the assignment.

The way Peter responds to the failure of denying Jesus is also important, and can be contrasted with the way Judas responds to his own betrayal of Jesus. On the one hand, Judas betrays Jesus and, after recognizing the seriousness of his sin, returns to the chief priests and elders with the money. However, Judas fails to turn back to the Lord; instead, he falls into despair: "Flinging the money into the temple he departed and went off and hanged himself" (Matt 27:5). On the other hand, Peter denies Jesus and, after recognizing the seriousness of his three-fold sin, breaks down, weeps, and eventually "turns back" (Luke 22:31) to the Lord. It is mysterious that Jesus prays for Peter, but no mention is made of the Lord praying for Judas.

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<sup>314</sup> Failure is often manifest through commission of sin, but also through omission of what one can and should do.

<sup>315</sup> Francis points out that Christ is the source of our hope even in the midst of embracing the difficulties of evangelization. See *Evangelii Gaudium*, 275 where he states: "Some people do not commit themselves to mission because they think that nothing will change and that it is useless to make the effort... if we think that things are not going to change, we need to recall that Jesus Christ has triumphed over sin and death and is now almighty. Jesus Christ truly lives. Put another way, "if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain" (1 Cor 15:14). The Gospel tells us that when the first disciples went forth to preach, "the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message" (Mk 16:20). The same thing happens today. We are invited to discover this, to experience it. Christ, risen and glorified, is the wellspring of our hope, and he will not deprive us of the help we need to carry out the mission which he has entrusted to us."

Peter stands as a model of how the Lord deals with those who deny him: with forgiveness.<sup>316</sup>

The priest of the New Evangelization, aware of his own sinfulness, as a man of hope does well to return to the Lord in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

A second lesson from this passage for priests of the New Evangelization is found in the positive aspects of Peter's response to Jesus' prediction in Zechariah: that, even in the midst of failure, good desire and right knowledge can still be at work. First, although Peter failed, he had a good desire in that he did want to be with Jesus (which is the mark of authentic discipleship), even if it meant dying with him.<sup>317</sup> Second, although Peter ignores the second part of Jesus' prediction, he "no longer disputes that Jesus will suffer death."<sup>318</sup> Rather, he professes that he will go to death with Jesus. This shows a development, albeit limited, of Peter's understanding of Jesus' mission.<sup>319</sup> The priest of the New Evangelization, in his pastoral care for others, does well to look beyond the failures of faith and understanding of God and, instead, to see the good desire and right knowledge, albeit limited, often at work in people's lives.

Thus far, Peter has emerged as a loved sinner called by Christ (Luke 5:1-11) to fulfill the particularized role of *Petros* (Matt 16:13-20). Through the encounters with Christ, Peter has learned about his own weakness, evident in his denial of Jesus (Mark 14:66-72); he has also learned about Jesus' love and encouragement for him, evident in the latter's prayer that he be the one who will strengthen his brothers (Luke 22:31-34). We now turn to the post-resurrection

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<sup>316</sup> Healy, *The Gospel of Mark*, 288. The prophecy of Zech and Peter turning back to the Lord "is an assurance that forgiveness and restoration are available to all those who desert or deny Jesus under persecution, as some of Mark's first readers may have done."

<sup>317</sup> Cassidy, *Four Times Peter : Portrayals of Peter in the Four Gospels and at Philippi*, 30.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

passage, John 21:1-19, where the risen Jesus calls Peter to share in his mission in a new way. Peter will be identified as a fisher of persons, a shepherd of the flock and a future martyr.

### **John 21:1-19: Peter in the Light of the Resurrection**

#### **Analysis and Themes**

In this post resurrection passage, Peter and six other disciples go fishing on the Sea of Tiberius (John 21:1-14).<sup>320</sup> Although they fish all night, they catch nothing.<sup>321</sup> Jesus, unknown to them for the moment, stands on the shore and directs them to fish in a particular place. The catch is so large that the disciples are unable to pull the nets into the boat. The Beloved Disciple recognizes the Lord, and Peter jumps into the water to quickly swim ashore and see him. Before eating a meal of bread and fish cooked on a charcoal fire, Jesus instructs Peter to drag ashore the net of 153 large fish. After breakfast, Jesus and Peter have a conversation in which the Lord asks the apostle three times, “Do you love me?” Each time Peter replies that he does (21:15-17). Next, Jesus reveals to Peter by “what kind of death he would glorify God” (21:19), and then commands him: “Follow me” (21:19).

The passage at hand helps to frame the general theme of revelation in John’s Gospel.<sup>322</sup>

At the beginning of the Fourth Gospel, Jesus “revealed his glory and his disciples began to

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<sup>320</sup> Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn and Paul Nadim Tarari, *The New Testament: An Introduction* (Crestwood, NY.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary, 1999), 258. Kuhn and Tarazi note that the number seven and the named disciples on this fishing excursion indicate the presence of the whole community of believers led by Peter in the manifestation of Jesus to the whole world through the disciples’ imitation of Jesus.

<sup>321</sup> See Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005), 511. Lincoln notes that fishing has a missionary connotation here and that catching nothing suggests a failure and frustration in the mission the disciples have been given.

<sup>322</sup> See Sandra Marie Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 63-78. ; Richard J. Clifford, Daniel J. Harrington, Ivan T. Kaufman, John S. Kselman, John T. Townsend, David N. Freedman, *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1st ed., ed., “John, The Gospel,” (New York, N.Y.:

believe in him” (2:11) through the wondrous “sign” of turning water into an abundance of wine at Cana. Here, at the end of John, the resurrected Jesus “revealed himself again to his disciples at the Sea of Tiberius” (22:1) through another sign of abundance: the catch of fish.<sup>323</sup> The catch of fish in John 21 renews Peter’s missionary identity as a fisher of persons. Moreover, it contains an interesting comparison with Luke 5. In John 21, Jesus now renews his call to Peter to be a fisher of persons in the newness and power of the resurrection. Peter’s reaction in John 21 is strikingly different than in Luke 5. Whereas in Luke, Peter is fearful and asks the Lord to depart from him, in John, Peter impetuously<sup>324</sup> jumps into the sea to get ashore quickly and to be close to the Lord (John 21:7). Peter will soon see that, in the mission-driven light of the resurrection, “to be with Jesus” and missionary activity go hand in hand.<sup>325</sup> Once ashore, Jesus sends Peter back to the net of fish and commands him to “bring some of the fish you just caught” (22:10); Peter then goes to “drag the net ashore full of 153 large fish” (22:11). The verb used to describe Peter’s action of dragging the net of fish is the same one employed to express that the Father draws all people to himself (6:44) and that Jesus, when lifted from the earth, will draw all people to himself (12:32).<sup>326</sup> The untorn yet exceedingly full net is symbolic of the expanding yet unified community of believers.<sup>327</sup> The fish symbolize those who are caught up into the net of the Gospel and are gathered together into one catch. Peter and the disciples are to gather them

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Doubleday, 1992), 912-931. ; Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, "Introduction" (London; Greenwood, S.C.: Oliphants; Attic, 1977), 24-73.

<sup>323</sup> See Lincoln, *Gospel According to John*, 511. Lincoln notes Ezek 47:10 and the temple from which flows abundant fish in life giving water, and likens Jesus as the new temple whose missionary activity entails commanding where to fish and how to produce an abundant catch.

<sup>324</sup> Raymond Edward Brown, *The Gospel According to John XIII-XXI* (Garden City, N.Y.:Doubleday, 1966), 1096.

<sup>325</sup> Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1098.

<sup>326</sup> Lincoln, *Gospel According to Saint John*, 512.

<sup>327</sup> Cassidy, *Four Times Peter*, 103.

together, keep them as one, and draw them to Jesus. Peter's action of hauling the net full of large fish is symbolic of his participation in the missionary activity of God, who draws all peoples to himself and to the Kingdom of Heaven. It also shows that being with Jesus and being his missionary are interconnected. Jesus is teaching Peter that discipleship and mission are interrelated, and that Peter's true identity as a fisher of persons is found not only in being with Jesus, but also in the missionary activity for which Jesus came.<sup>328</sup> Here, just as at Caesarea Philippi, Peter is being challenged by Jesus to appropriate into his life the duality of his call to discipleship for the Twelve to be with Jesus and to be sent by him, as found in Mark 3.

The second part of the passage switches from fishing to pastoral imagery. Through the intimate conversation that follows the catch of fish and sharing of a meal, Jesus reveals to Peter his missionary identity as a shepherd of the flock. In this passage Jesus asks Peter three times if he loves him and follows each of Peter's answer with the command to give pastoral care for his flock. In the first question to Peter, Jesus asks: "Simon, Son of John, do you love me more than *these*?" It is clear that Jesus here is asking Peter, "Do you love me more than these other disciples love me?,"<sup>329</sup> and refers to Peter's earlier claims that his love for Jesus was superior to the other disciples: "[e]ven though *all* will have their faith shaken, mine will not be" (Mark 14:29), and "*I* will lay down my life for you" (John 13:37b).<sup>330</sup> Peter's response is honest and humble: "Yes Lord, you know that I love you." (21:15) By asking the question, Jesus points out that Peter in fact had not loved him more than the others. Peter had lacked the necessary love to

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<sup>328</sup> Francis Noel Davey and Hoskyns, Edwyn Clement, Sir, *The Fourth Gospel*, 2d revised ed. (London: Faber, 1947), 556-557.

<sup>329</sup> C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (London: S.P.C.K, 1958), 583.

<sup>330</sup> Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John* (London; New York; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson; Continuum; Hendrickson, 2005), 518.

lay down his life with and for the Lord, and therefore he failed to imitate the Good Shepherd who “lays down his life for the sheep” (10:11). In the second and third questions Jesus continues to give Peter the opportunity to make up for his three denials with three confessions of love. The scene and the questions combine in transporting the reader back to Peter’s denial of Jesus in the courtyard of the high priest. Just as Peter stood by a fire at dawn and answered three times that he was *not* a disciple of Jesus, now Peter stands by a charcoal fire, at dawn, and answers three times that he *is* a disciple of Jesus. Although the questions are different, their essence is the same. What is at issue<sup>331</sup> is Peter’s relationship to Jesus: “Do you love me?” and “Are you one of his disciples?” both get at the essence of Peter’s relationship to Jesus.

This conversation reveals different aspects of Jesus’ call to Peter. Peter’s call is not revoked. Rather, through the intimate conversation, his call is renewed in the light of the resurrection. Jesus invites Peter to participate in his role as Good Shepherd by caring for the flock in Jesus’ place. Jesus’ invitation to Peter to tend and feed the flock extends beyond the flock represented by his disciples to others destined for the flock, although not yet within the fold. When speaking of himself as Good Shepherd, Jesus affirms that he “has other sheep that do not belong to this fold, these I must lead and they will hear my voice and there will be one flock and one shepherd” (John 10:14). The fact that Jesus invites Peter to share in his role as Good Shepherd means that the apostle is to share in the Lord’s role of leading those others into the fold. Here is revealed the missionary aspect of Peter’s identity as shepherd of the flock.<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> Cassidy, *Four Times Peter*, 103.

<sup>332</sup> Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 585.

This passage is best understood in its relation to John 10:1-18, especially John 10:14-18,<sup>333</sup> in which Jesus teaches about himself as the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd, who is also the gate for the sheep, tends and cares for the sheep, goes ahead of them, is known and followed by them and lays down his life for them. By commanding Peter to perform pastoral care for his sheep, Jesus is inviting Peter to imitate him as the Good Shepherd. Just as Jesus tends and feed his sheep, Peter is to do the same and “repeat the relationship Jesus had with his flock.”<sup>334</sup> Jesus is inviting Peter into his mission as shepherd of the flock in imitation of the Good Shepherd.

Peter will “show the genuineness of his love by caring for those who belong to Jesus, the Good Shepherd,”<sup>335</sup> by participating in the relationship Jesus has with his flock<sup>336</sup> and by imitating the Good Shepherd who brings others into the fold. The ultimate witness of Peter’s love for the Lord, however, is through being martyred, a role Jesus invites him into with the words “Follow me” (21:19). Jesus’ invitation to bear witness through martyrdom is an invitation to share in the Lord’s mission of giving glory to God and rounds out the presentation of Peter’s identity in John 21. In martyrdom Peter will repeat what Jesus does in the crucifixion: he will reveal the glory of God by his self-gift in imitation of Jesus, who laid down his life for the sheep.<sup>337</sup> In this Jesus shows Peter that what the latter had promised but failed to do before the crucifixion, he will be able to do in the future. In this Jesus encourages Peter in his role as

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<sup>333</sup> Ibid.

<sup>334</sup> Daniel J Harrington and Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 555.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

<sup>337</sup> Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 555 .

shepherd of the flock and shows confidence in him and calls him to total love. The way Peter will follow Jesus is the same way that Jesus followed the will of his heavenly Father: “you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go” (21:18). This way of glorifying God shows Peter’s identity as a martyr for the Lord.

### **Lessons for Priests of the New Evangelization**

There are manifold lessons for priests of the New Evangelization in this post-resurrection appearance story, some of which are already implied in the analysis above. Here, two lessons are presented. The first lesson has two parts and is found in the beginning of the passage at hand in which is described the miraculous catch of fish. The first point of the lesson is seen in the contrast between what Peter and the disciples accomplish prior to the encounter with Jesus, as compared to what they accomplish after following the instructions of Jesus. Peter and the disciples, in the context of returning to the fishing profession after the crucifixion, labor all night and catch nothing. Even though they exercise their trade with a certain expertise, they accomplish nothing in relation to their work. Their nets are empty and they have labored in vain. But once they encounter the risen Lord and follow his instructions, they have a super abundant catch. With Jesus, they accomplish even more than they could ever have imagined on their own. They have also accomplished even more than they themselves can handle without assistance from Him. The lesson is that without Jesus, nothing of worth seems to be accomplished, but with Jesus more than could be imagined comes to fruition. The second point of the lesson is found in the question Jesus asks of Peter and the disciples before the huge catch of fish: “Children, have you caught anything to eat?” (21:5) By asking this question, Jesus is challenging the disciples to reflect upon their labor, admit their need for help and ask themselves why they have caught nothing. The question therefore evokes a certain self-reflection on the part of the



disciples. So too, in the New Evangelization, priests should reflect upon their own ministerial activity and ask themselves in what ways they need to do things differently.<sup>338</sup> Are we content to simply maintain the Church or do we focus on how to be missionaries to our own parish community? Are we like the fisherman who catches nothing but is content to spend his time tidying up the nets and the boat while returning day after day with no catch? This time of the New Evangelization is a time for the Church, especially priests, to ask ourselves “If we have we caught nothing: why?” The disciples learned that after following the instructions of the Lord, they had a huge catch. Priests who are attentive to the guidance of the Lord in their pastoral ministry and follow his instructions can expect an equivalent catch. The way the Lord manifests the catch, however, is not always so evident.

The second lesson from the passage at hand is found in the conversation between Jesus and Peter in which Jesus helps Peter to admit his own failure to love the Lord. Some authors, like Pope Benedict XVI, note the Evangelist’s alternating use of the Greek words *agapaō* and *phileō* in the passage and conclude that, although Peter’s admission that his own love for Jesus is wanting, Jesus is not deterred from inviting Peter to exercise pastoral care of the flock.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> Pope Francis challenges the Church to a deeper self-assessment in *Evangelii Gaudium* 25-39, sections *Pastoral Activity and Conversion* and *From the Heart of the Gospel*. For example, in reference to new ways of being missionary he writes: “I dream of a ‘missionary option’, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with himself.” *Evangelii Gaudium*, 27. In *Evangelii Gaudium* 33 he notes: “Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: ‘We have always done it this way’. I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities. A proposal of goals without an adequate communal search for the means of achieving them will inevitably prove illusory. I encourage everyone to apply the guidelines found in this document generously and courageously, without inhibitions or fear.”

<sup>339</sup> Benedict XVI, “General Audience: Peter the Apostle”, May 24, 2006, Vatican Web site, <http://www.vatican.va/>

Regardless of how one interprets the use of the Greek words for love, the passage nonetheless indicates Peter's failure and weakness before Jesus, and Jesus' commission of Peter regardless of his failures. His failure makes the Lord's insistence that Peter exercise pastoral care for the flock all the more striking. Jesus calls Peter to this unique role not because he has loved Jesus perfectly, but, in part, in order to allow Peter the opportunity to prove his love for him. Peter will eventually love Jesus in the most perfect way of martyrdom. Here also is an important point about mission: Mission is a response to the intimate friendship of love to which the Lord calls each priest. Love, therefore, is the source and motivation toward mission for the priest of the New Evangelization. These points have serious implications for how the priest of the New Evangelization sees his vocational call. God does not call a man to priesthood because the man is perfect, but as a mysterious invitation to love in a unique way. His call presents the opportunity to grow in love, even to the point of laying down one's life. The priest is called to live priestly ministry as a response to God's love. This awareness allows the priest of the New Evangelization to exercise his priestly ministry mindful of his own fragility but confident that he can count on the presence of Jesus with him.<sup>340</sup> For a priest, the missionary dimension of his call flows from the relationship of love that God has established with him.<sup>341</sup>

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[holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/audiences/2006/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_aud\\_20060524\\_en.html](http://holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences/2006/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20060524_en.html) (accessed May 15, 2014).

<sup>340</sup> Ibid.

<sup>341</sup> In *Evangelii Gaudium* 8, Francis frames the topic of evangelization in terms of an encounter with Christ that naturally leads to a desire to share the faith. The encounter is based upon the love of God for us: "Thanks solely to this encounter – or renewed encounter – with God's love, which blossoms into an enriching friendship, we are liberated from our narrowness and self-absorption. We become fully human when we become more than human, when we let God bring us beyond ourselves in order to attain the fullest truth of our being. Here we find the source and inspiration of all our efforts at evangelization. For if we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?"

## Summary

This chapter has analyzed five Scripture passages, each of which has shown insights into the apostle Peter and the development of a relationship of friendship with Jesus Christ. Peter's identity has come into focus. In Luke 5:1-11, at the Lake of Gennesaret, Peter is identified as a loved sinner called by Christ to follow him. In this passage the themes of vocation, obedience, and salvation come together to show the inherent integration of call, identity, and mission and the importance of an encounter with Jesus in coming to one's identity. The next passage, in which Peter confesses Jesus as "Christ, Son of the living God" (Matt 16:13-20), shows a development in Peter's identity in the more particularized role as *Petros*, as well as Peter's openness to divine revelation. The themes of revelation and knowledge of God and self frame a lesson for priests, pointing out a need for ongoing reflection in priestly life and awareness of the origins of the vocational call. Luke 22:31-34, presented how Jesus prays for Peter and encourages him to strengthen his brothers after he himself turns back in conversion. This passage shows themes of the authority of Jesus over evil and the love of Jesus, particularly for Peter, even in the midst of the latter's sinfulness. The lesson for priests to imitate Jesus' encouragement of Peter by encouraging one another is also found in this passage. In Mark 14:66-72, through the negative portrayal of Peter, the prophecy of Zechariah 13:7, and understanding the meaning of denial, Peter's identity as a weak sinner in need of redemption is seen. Through this passage, priests of the New Evangelization are encouraged to remember that embracing the Cross is difficult, but possible, and that failure often has some redemptive dimension. In the last passage analyzed, John 21:1-19, the themes of revelation, mission, call and love come together to show Peter's identity in the post resurrection period as a fisher of People, shepherd of the flock, and future martyr for the Lord. Peter's encounter at the Sea of

Tiberius with the risen Lord offers to priests of the New Evangelization the lessons that, because without Jesus nothing of worth is accomplished, the priest does well to reflect upon how the Lord is guiding his daily ministry. This passage also teaches that in the resurrection, love, not death prevails.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis has presented the theme of the New Evangelization from an historical perspective, beginning with the pontificate of Benedict XV and concluding with the Synod of the New Evangelization. It has also presented the apostle Peter as an example for priests of the New Evangelization by providing lessons based on the encounter of Peter with the person of Jesus Christ. Several themes for consideration have been presented that are helpful to priests today in their continuing formation as instruments of God's grace through the proclamation of the life changing and indispensable message of the Gospel. As the Church continues to learn how to exercise her missionary dimension, she will need to continually return to some of the themes presented herein. Priests of the New Evangelization will need to continually delve deeper into their own relationship with the person of Jesus Christ in order to be authentic witnesses to the truth of the Gospel. By the grace provided by God and with the example and intercession of Saint Peter the Apostle, may the Church in Boston become an example to others that "[t]he joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew."<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> Evangelii Gaudium, 1.

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